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**TOWARDS  
AN UNDERSTANDING  
OF SPIRITUALITY  
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE  
The Case of Holton Lee**

**A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies  
(Developing a Spirituality Praxis within  
an Interdisciplinary Organisation)**

**Carolyn Jean Reinhart**

**National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships  
Middlesex University**

**August, 2003**

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I dedicate this Report to the loving memory of Faith Lees, whose friendship for twenty-one years also laid foundations in my life, which enabled and inspired me to do this work and whose wisdom has continued to nurture my spirituality.



*“One cannot be right with God unless there is also some sense of being right in one’s relationships with other creatures, with the planet, with the cosmos” The spiritual journey involves a big paradigm shift from understanding our spiritual life in very personal individualistic terms towards one that embraces a wider reality, one which is fundamental to an authentic spirituality which contrasts to that of a spirituality search which attempts to take a direct line between me and God. We understand now that there are a whole web of interconnecting lines; God also enters our lives through the secular, mundane and daily. Our spiritual search involves holding all this together in meaningful relation and connection as our understanding of God shifts. (O’Murchu, 2002)*

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## SUMMARY OVERVIEW

Holton Lee's mission is, "... empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness and spirituality" We are a voluntary sector charity with longstanding Christian roots committed to be inclusive, non-discriminatory and provide equal opportunity. Our "research and development" need and question was: "How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic spirituality within its praxis?" We first had to design an appropriate research approach with which to consider the new academic fields of spirituality and "spirituality at work" or organisational context. Since spirituality is understood through the lens of praxis, we started our Participative Action Research in the only place we could, the "here and now" of our current practice, committed to build affirmatively on the existing vision, mission and ethos with the fifty-seven year old roots of *The Then*, through *The Now* of the research process, for the sake of *The Tomorrow*.

As researcher/worker 1<sup>st</sup> person ethnographer I worked "with" five 2<sup>nd</sup> person co-researchers in the organisation. We functioned as an informed reading group with mutual shared responsibility throughout our four year non-linear, cyclical iterative lived inquiry and process in which we were committed to resolve emerging conflict. We had monthly meetings and several half day events/workshops designed to facilitate 3<sup>rd</sup> person awareness/consciousness raising and dissemination within the organisation, which enabled us, as insiders, to become more fully informed and self-critical, and to guard against projection, manipulation, biases or prejudices.

We were engaged in a bottom-up process of experiential and embodied learning rather than attempting to find a party line to impose top-down theory, "doing to others" as objects. Completing all the stages of the Learning, Pastoral, Hermeneutical and Action Research cycles along with the Discernment Process, and Heuristic Approach resulted in the creation of further action, empowerment, liberation and the creation of knowledge, as we integrated intervening impacts and development which informed and shaped subsequent steps and future cycles. Data was continually cycled and re-cycled as we were able to be responsive, learning on the run, with enhanced understanding. The parallel process of on-going reflection and discernment helped us as we formulated more informed plans for action. In this way our practice was changed. As a Case Study we relied on extensive literature review in order not to be isolated but rather find interconnected solutions with research and action outcomes as by-products of our process to insure informed action. Second and third person interviews and writing contributed to the "writing up" of our story.

Fruitful dialogue between critical reflection "and" participative engagement enabled spirituality to be woven throughout the organisation. The adequacy or worthwhileness of our participative research project was determined by the degree to which transformation and emancipation was achieved and lived out. Thus the research process, which connected power and knowledge, did contribute to the flourishing of those involved in our "community of practice" with the fruit and outcome of deep, connected and embodied triple loop learning, change, transformation and empowerment at individual, group and organisational levels with shared power and voice. As result of identifying and correcting gaps between the vision/theory and practice, our organisational system changed from a hierarchical to flat structure and deeper and more sound foundations were laid as theory and practice continually informed each other with resultant generalisable and transferable grounded living theoretical underpinnings extrapolated. A Personal Growth and Spirituality Statement and Policy and Job Description

were written along with the development of a Basic Model of inclusive praxis as well as a Model for Understanding and Developing Spirituality Praxis. Guidelines and principles were identified to help Holton Lee and others understand how to appropriate spirituality praxis within their own local contexts, environments and milieu with consideration for our global home/community.



## **Chapter One:**

### **PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE PROJECT**

Our real research need began in 1999. Holton Lee's mission is: "...empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and Disabled people through Creativity, Environmental Awareness, Personal growth and Spirituality." These four Aspects were identified, outlined and written at its founding in 1992. Since then the organisation has focused on developing the Disability and Environmental Aspects and three years ago we decided to concentrate on developing the Spirituality/Personal Growth as well as the Arts/Creativity Aspects. I work very closely with the Director as Projects Development Manager and so this became our joint task, that is, to establish solid and secure foundations on which to build the future, particularly then, in the Arts and Spirituality. Our research question asked: "How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis?" The aim and need therefore was to discover what was necessary in order to develop and offer such a spirituality praxis, one which was based on the founding vision, and then for us to be able to "live it" by disseminating it within the organisation. Thus we could provide a working model and resources both within the organisation and also as part of our global context which we affect and are affected by.

I had completed an MA in Christian Spirituality in 1999 at Heythrop College, University of London and during my study learned that the contemporary understanding of "Spirituality" had by now become a new academic field as well as a global minefield of confusion. Holton Lee obviously needed to develop both practice and theory in order to be healthy, authentic and consistent with the founding vision, ethos and theology. The founding group was a Christian Community and we are now a secular voluntary sector Charity which provides the container, context and milieu for spirituality practice, as a "community of practice". Our emerging needs were that we needed to "know" more about contemporary spirituality and how it differs from theology and religion particularly since we wanted to ensure that the organisation was making sufficient provision so that we could develop the Spirituality and Personal Growth Aspect in a manner consistent with the founding vision and principles.

This doctoral project is one of Research “and” Development, therefore “development” became an extremely large part of the whole Project, that is, about 50% of the work; of course, that was also our need at Holton Lee. Because of the confusing nature of the subject matter and field of study, “Spirituality”, the research process itself had to involve cycles and spirals of cognitive and affective learning and knowing with action “and” development of praxis. The fruit of evaluating our action was embodied knowledge, which gradually emerged from the life and drama of our data since theory and practice continually informed each other throughout each iterative and chronological cycle. The needed outcomes of healthy and sound theoretical underpinnings helped to lay foundations for spirituality praxis and the subsequent grounded and “living theory” can be shared with the relevant stakeholders, now and in the future, which includes our organisation - trustees, staff and volunteers, the university, other organisations and academics. This final Report can help to ensure that new members can be informed and thus more able to embrace and carry forward, in a consistent manner, the work which began in 1945. Naming, recording and putting something in place, with both theory and practice, produced guidelines and recommendations for future praxis.

This report is an account, the fruit of our research and development journey and story. It is divided into seven following chapters.

Chapter Two considers *why the study and research is important and significant* in helping to lay solid foundations and improve practice in spirituality as a new and emerging academic field of study, not only for us at Holton Lee, but more broadly because it addresses the integration of the whole of life. Holton Lee’s own mission, founding vision and policy is one of integration, inclusion and wholeness. In 1993, the late Lady Lees, one of the founders, wrote of our corporate vision, “ We expect Holton Lee to be a centre to which people can come to discover new and innovative approaches, whether it be in practical matters or in ways of integrating the spiritual, psychological and physical aspects of their lives. After years of separating out and compartmentalising people, making a division between science and religion, able-bodied and disabled, creative and practical, we believe that Holton Lee will demonstrate a holistic and therefore healing view of life.” Thus our work since 1992 has been based on this vision. The research itself was contextualised within our 350-acre site and because of Holton Lee’s mission had to consider the integration of its four Aspects of

the Arts, Disability, Environment and Personal Growth & Spirituality, within the organisation as environment, container and context for praxis, which implies socio-political and cultural considerations.

Chapter Three outlines the *context of the study* with its fifty-seven year old roots which began with the Lees family, particularly Lady Madeline. Then

Sir Thomas and Lady Lees, founded a lay ecumenical Christian Community, thirty years ago, called Post Green, which in turn in 1990 had a vision to found Holton Lee, which opened in 1992.

It is situated on the edge of Poole Harbour, much of which is SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) and therefore we have significant ongoing partnership with English Nature, RSPB and Dorset Wildlife Trust. Within this environment Holton Lee offers accessible short term residential accommodation for holidays, activities, retreats and relaxation for Disabled and non-disabled people as well as offering resources and facilities for the Arts, conferences, exhibitions, workshops and outdoor events. Our literature states that: “The vision has developed out of the belief that within each person is the potential for growth and creativity, which when recognised, enables that person to mature and flourish. At Holton Lee we work to provide a peaceful relaxing atmosphere for our guests within a supportive environment and pleasant surroundings. There are opportunities for people to grow in understanding of themselves, of others and the environment. Holton Lee operates as a place of refuge, safe yet potentially stimulating, where people may discover ways of integrating the creative, spiritual and physical aspects of themselves.” Guests and visitors come from all over the country.

Chapter Four addresses *why the investigation at Holton Lee is pertinent* to the emerging, growing and confusing topic of spirituality. Because our research was



contextualised within a secular voluntary sector Charity, which is small, we were therefore able to conduct the research and development, as a Case Study, in depth and over a three-year period. Therefore we were also able to extrapolate and develop relevant theory in order to continually inform our practice which led to an understanding of how to embed spirituality praxis, which in turn began to shape itself as a model, along with accompanying guidelines which subsequently began to emerge from our praxis. We began by having to design an appropriate research approach with which to consider spirituality and our specific research question.

Chapter Five outlines *how the investigation proceeded and what it entailed*. As a Case Study the co-operative Participative Action Research investigation and journey took place in real time in a real situation, over a period of three years. My understanding of Action Research was that it is: “an approach to research which aims at both taking action and creating knowledge or theory about that action.” A significant feature is that its main purpose is to “... forge a more direct link between intellectual knowledge/theory and action so that each inquiry contributes directly to the flourishing of human persons and their communities.” (Coghlan & Brannick: 2001, preface and 8) Therefore we were considering a “quality of life” participating “with” others rather than “doing to” the others involved. The research group consisted of six people working together mutually and participatively; we met monthly and part of our on-going consideration was how indeed to integrate and “live out” Spirituality with the other Aspects of The Arts, Disability and The Environment. We were always very concerned that, as an organisation, we didn’t become fragmented, compartmentalised and separate in our various Aspect Groups. Our approach therefore required a non-linear, spiral investigation, which grew in ever deepening cycles, from the “bottom up” of actual experience, along with inclusion and consideration of the long-standing history with its own theology/theory. In fact, the emerging research model and metaphor was one of a tree, which was relevant to both the Post Green logo and Holton Lee’s own logo.

The Spirituality Research Group comprised the Director, two Trustees, the Land Manager and a Volunteer, who is also a Counsellor and Spiritual Director, along with myself as an ethnographic researcher who has worked as Project Development Manager from the beginning of 1990 as one of Holton Lee's founding members. The research design, was understood as "process", which entailed a "process of interaction within the process" (Parffrey web: 7), which was itself the end and way to get the results that we needed. All along I realised that we needed to stay in the process fully and not miss out the middle two aspects of the deep Learning Cycle which was one of deep learning, movement, growth and change. We came to the research as individual "I's", and as we began to work within the group we became "we's", and as we persisted in the cycles we emerged as an "us" within the organisation, and finally for the "them" of other audiences. Our process of lived inquiry tacitly and implicitly required deep and significant learning, change and transformation at each level of the "bottom-up" experiential learning process which was therefore one of empowerment, not imposing "top down" rationalistic and prescriptive theories and solutions, particularly as it considered movement and development from the contexts of "Then" of past history, to the "Now" of current practice for the sake of the "Tomorrow".

Obviously a great deal of literature review was required both to inform our emerging thinking about research and practice and also to learn from other voices in the growing field of spirituality. This was necessary particularly since we were considering how an understanding of spirituality related to theology and religion particularly within an organisational context, environment and milieu, which more recently has generally become referred to as, "spirituality and work". Therefore consideration of structure and infrastructure within the organisation as context for praxis became increasingly important. Our research understanding and action yielded simultaneous action and research outcomes. Data were also collected through informal conversations, open interviews of a cross-section of six people within the organisation, as well as with the co-researchers and analysis of monthly meetings. A significant feature of the "writing up" of this research report is in the use of the extensive second person writing of the co-researchers so that the resultant narrative isn't a monologue with my voice only and therefore represents shared participative and mutual reporting and discourse.

Chapter Six outlines *what the investigation produced* within the three-year deep learning process. There were various outcomes for us as individuals and as an

organisation. This chapter outlines the living and grounded theory, which emerged and was developed with further understanding about how to embody spirituality for individuals, organisations and society, through embodied knowing. The main themes were a new understanding of spirituality in terms of: *the concept of spirituality praxis; the relationship of religion and spirituality; and the relationship of spirituality and work*, which included an in-depth consideration of spirituality and organisational structure and consideration of the contribution which quantum science now offers to spirituality, organisations and relationships, leadership and power.

In the course of “research and development” a *model*, as an on-going cycle to facilitate understanding and development of a holistic spirituality praxis within the organisation began to emerge. The model includes theoretical understanding/underpinnings of: the use of language and the need for communication; secular and spiritual praxis; sound Spirituality theory; transformation and appropriation and relationships of inter-dependence, all taking place within the organisation as context. Part of the research task and need was to explore and develop an understanding of how Spirituality relates interactively and is integrated with the Arts, Disability and the Environment within the group and the organisation as a whole. This process was initiated and now continues within the organisation following the research project. Since we are an integrated and inclusive organisation our study, of necessity, had to include consideration of minority and oppressed groups, within structures, society, religion and theory so that domination and oppression was replaced by empowerment and enabling, since our mission statement states that we try to empower and resource people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality. Hopefully we are also therefore now a place which people can visit to see a developing “working model”. Our Spirituality statement is: “At Holton Lee, we believe spirituality to be both personal and social, challenging us to reclaim connections with ourselves, others, the sacred and our world. It is inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience, thus integrating body, mind and spirit and facilitating personal growth. Such growth comes from discovering our inner potential and growing into the fullness of who we are created to be, recognising our interdependence with one another and the world we belong to.”

The *methodology* which we developed and used can now also be shared as a basis for other groups, organisations and communities of practice to use, adapt and amend as they

research and develop spirituality praxis within their own contexts. Practical outcomes of the research include: changed people, changed structures, this report, a more extensive study held within the resource room at Holton Lee, a bound copy of the complete interviews from the voices of the cross section of people involved at Holton Lee, a spirituality statement, spirituality policy, the initiation of and contribution to the Interactive Policy for the four Aspects and a draft job description for a full-time worker in the Spirituality Aspect.

Chapter Seven gives our embedding spirituality in organisations *Specific Guidelines* which were identified, named and outlined, both for Holton Lee and other organisations/communities. The understanding, of course, is that these are not written in tablets of stone, rigid maps, formulae or techniques but rather as some of the major factors and issues which organisations need to consider. Chapter Eight concludes the study and ends with *suggestions for further research and study* in the field of spirituality.

After this research project ends we will continue with our organisational journey. This is difficult in our contemporary world which is engaged in the on-going struggle for meaning in a world which is dis-eased at so many levels as those in power continue to take a major part in shaping our global home. But perhaps we can take heed of Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, recent reminder of a way forward, through the title of his book just re-issued which states: Forget your self and find your soul.

“Hypocrisy, intolerance and self-regard are common to many who think they are ‘good’ ...” In his exploration of the soul, he examines the difficult path to self-knowledge, based on the works of the 16<sup>th</sup> century nun and mystic Teresa of Avila. She wants a self-knowledge which is habitual and tacit knowing so we can unreflectively adjust our behaviour in accordance with an underpinning awareness in which we know what kinds of relations and behaviour are destructive. God radiates love from the “centre” of our creatureliness, otherwise we are in danger of projecting our own fears and uncertainties onto others. (Williams, 2002).

On 2 October 2002 Dr Williams gave an address organised by Sarum College in Salisbury in which he outlined some of his understanding of ways forward in our world as we make a transition from classical nation to market states with a globalised economy, suggesting that we therefore would have to have accompanying transnational

protocols, values, ethics, legal agreements and institutions, which will make interventions which are concerned with human liberty, while still retaining our national and regional communities. Our collective security, he suggests, will come about as we deal with causes rather than simply with symptoms, recognising that we have a common past before we can have a common future. Because we no longer have nation state boundaries against threat we must also recognise the end of war before peace can happen. He believes we will need all the philosophical and religious resources we have so we can share values and resources with co-operative and collaborative approaches and therefore the religious perspective is now more urgent and necessary in and for our world than ever where we can have more firm agreed visions of our humanity in God. All the great world religions and faiths believe that human beings are built so as to be receptive to reality through prayer and imagination and so can join each other in sharing silence rather than in multi-faith worship. He believes that schools and education also have a great part to play since education equips people to tell their own connected story of their own experience and to make connections, which are coherent and not fragmented. Cultural connections can be transformative because we still need local identity and roots otherwise we become oppressed and alienated. We need to begin to formulate properly rooted and grounded priorities which includes our nationalism while also guarding against tribal defensiveness.

These are very large issues but it is the hope and intent of this study of spirituality within the context of Holton Lee that we can make a contribution to understanding and addressing these issues.



## **Chapter Two:**

### **WHY THE STUDY IS SIGNIFICANT**

This study on spirituality is particularly significant and important for several reasons. *Firstly*, because of current social interest and needs in the environment, workplace and cultural and political relations with regard to “spirituality” *Secondly*, because spirituality itself is an emerging academic field of study and therefore has implications, connections and relevance with other academic disciplines such as research, theology, organisations, psychology and science. *Thirdly*, because our research process itself has led to improved practice at Holton Lee and since what we have learned is transferable; perhaps it can now help to improve the practice within other organisations. The changes within our structure will be described in Chapter Five and developed and considered in Chapter Six.

Our research process highlighted the realisation that spirituality is about a way and quality of life with an ability to “live it” at personal, interpersonal, group, organisational, societal and global levels. It has to do therefore with identifying, understanding and addressing the deep needs and concerns within these contexts, that is, we live with inter-dependence and inter-relationship in our web of connectivity.

Biberman & Whitty, (2000: xxi-xxiii) observe that some people are conscious and aware of such interest and the need for change and others are not. Some have had a personal “wake up call” through an experience within personal, family, group, organisational, societal or global contexts which has resulted in heightened awareness and others have not and so are unaware of any need for change and transformation. Many agree that the Modern Paradigm has resulted in large systems being undermined through cultural pathology, addictions and shadow. It is one of toxic stress and inequality in the name of profit and based on logic and the Mechanistic Paradigm which assumes people can be scientifically measured and categorized. Therefore a process of cultural and societal growth into higher consciousness is needed along with systematic changes and the key to spiritual change must come from both within individuals and organisations, through balancing intellect, emotionality and a sense of common purpose. (Biberman et al, 2000: 217-228)

Physicist Zohar argues that Mechanistic Physics has given us our current worldview which is the central paradigm of the modern world. It stresses rigid bureaucratic organisational and hierarchical structures of power with the result that there are detached individuals who are ignorant of the whole, are alienated from each other and the “expert” is alienated from the situation or community in which he or she practises his/her expertise. The importance and reality of relationship is denied with no understanding for why people might ever act on behalf of others with any sort of social cohesion while we are set in opposition to the world of nature and to the natural within ourselves. Familiar patterns of family, community, business and even nation are breaking down and old political and economic systems are no longer able to answer our deepest needs and questions, nor inspire us with vision or motivation while our relationship to nature has reached global urgency. With such fragmentation of modern life we lack consensus about meanings, values, customs and symbols in our culture of narcissism, which is barren at its heart. Therefore we need a new kind of social and shared reality where we learn to experience reality as an integrated whole. But this shift from our dominant mechanistic models of self and society will require a revolution in our perspective and social reality. (Zohar, 1994:21-36) Classical physics has left us in a spiritual vacuum with no spiritual dimension in an individualistic society. But in “community” both individuals and community coexist and are woven into the being of others and thus transcend the individualist/collectivist divide experiencing instead an “emergent relational whole” in which “relationship evokes reality”. (Zohar, 1994:120-130,105-113)

Cavanaugh believes that the consequences of embracing spirituality will have profound effects on policies, practices, social and moral impacts on the global market, ethical behaviour and how organisational values affect personal values. (Cavanaugh, 2000:149-164) Waddock points out that structures and systems as context for spirituality praxis are important to consider because those which are enabling and empowering can provide a context in which spirituality can be lived out and not stifled. Connectedness and healthy interdependence are “... truly part of a communitarian organisational spirituality” (Biberman & Whitty, 2000: xvii-xxi)

This chapter explores an understanding of spirituality under the headings of current social interest, emerging academic field and improved practice at Holton Lee and other organisations.

## **1. Current Social Interest**

O'Murchu notes that many people recognise that there are broad and deep implications and overlaps across many disciplines, which are crucial to understand and embody in order to begin to make the necessary changes. Whether we have an interest in spirituality or are aware of it or not, the spiritual journey goes right into the whole world of politics and socio-economics therefore our theology must include understanding of ecology and economics alongside each other particularly since in order to stay spiritually sane we must discover how to hold these polarizations together. In every sphere of our daily lives there are important ethical, moral and spiritual implications. (O'Murchu, 2002:25)

Biberman & Whitty point out that the current dominant value system is one of greed, excessive competition and alienation from our fellow workers and the world around us. "Systems that work in a balanced way with all aspects of human potential and our conscious evolution, will best serve the future holistic, sustainable, global economy. Nothing less meets our human destiny and the needs of the planet." (Biberman & Whitty, 2000: xvii-xxi) Neal et al also point out that recent insights from the natural sciences show that the world is an individual whole, a web of relationships in which any action has complex, non-linear and unpredictable effects. Accepting this understanding therefore requires a shift in how we perceive and experience our world, a shift which brings the values of environmental sustainability, social equality and global awareness to the forefront of our attention, recognising then that its essence and management is more than economic endeavour. Spirituality and consciousness have been found to be at the very core of dynamic evolutionary systems and thus must be included in our analysis and practice of organisational design and change. Neal et al suggest that there are underlying patterns which describe the phenomena associated with transformation, so, "We must, indeed, transform our understanding of research, data collection, and knowledge". They propose that the management field will benefit greatly from incorporating a spiritual perspective into our theories as well as into our research and theory development processes. (Neal et al, 2000:5-14)

Our "current social interest" at Holton Lee and deep learning began when we had to ask ourselves more in-depth questions about the "current" meaning of the word

“spirituality” particularly so we could understand it within our own local and global contexts. We needed to know what was necessary in order to embed a relevant, sound, authentic and healthy spirituality praxis which could be integrated within our multidisciplinary secular organisation, but one which was also based on the intention and theology of the founding vision of integrating the Arts, Disability, the Environment and Spirituality. Therefore we began to view spirituality through the lens of our context and praxis at personal, group, organisational and societal levels and in so doing experienced deep learning, change and transformation in a triple loop. *Single-loop* learning results in changed actions in order to achieve desired outcomes but does not change the status quo and the norms underlying those actions; *double-loop* learning involves transformation of underlying norms and assumptions in order to generate new meanings. But *triple-loop* learning involves further transformation through generating underpinning structures, processes or methodologies necessary for double-loop transformations to occur. At the individual level people have learned how to learn and at our organisational level we have been able to develop some collective critical awareness of how the organisation was able to learn which then resulted in the production of new strategies which enhanced both our present praxis and thus the possibility for future organisational learning. (Doncaster, 1999: 43-44) Coghlan & Brannick explain that *Single loop/first order change* deals with routine issues within an existing way of thinking; *Double loop/second order change* involves a change of thinking and adopting a different mental mode, requiring lateral thinking and questioning of and altering the core assumptions which underlie the situation where *Triple loop/third order change* occurs when complex attitudinal and cultural problems are addressed, which themselves can actually be symptoms before problem resolution and organisational transformation can happen which involves developing and implementing new points of view and assumptions. In fact a system must unlearn before it can relearn. (Coghlan & Brannick: 2001)

It was in the here and now of our praxis that we began to develop our knowledge and formulate our critique and interpretation in order to provide norms for our human knowledge activity and transformation within our context. (Chopp, 1993:756-764) In this process of considering “spirituality” we have learned that the personal is political, that spirituality is socio-political and that liberation and spirituality affect our economic, political, social life, our psychological, cultural and religious lives. (Soelle, 1984:80-90) But it was only after two years into our research process that we were able as a research

group to agree and finally write the three sentences, of our spirituality “statement” as outlined in full in Chapter One, for the organisation which, in brief, states that spirituality is personal and social, inclusive of a wide range of human experience, facilitating personal growth, which comes from discovering our inner potential and growing into the wholeness of life. Praxis speaks of a new way of envisioning *Spirituality and Theology* which is precisely what we have been concerned with as we sought to integrate contemporary spirituality praxis with our founding theological roots. As our research and developing practice continued to be informed through the lens of our praxis we also began to recognise that our current social witness and attempts to “live out” and develop an integrated practice was itself a form of spirituality. Praxis is more than practice because it means theory informing practice with an interplay between theory and practice.

## **2. Emerging Academic Field**

Although as an organisation we had used the word “spirituality” for the previous ten years it was only rather recently that we ourselves became aware that it is actually a very confusing word and a new academic field. Several years ago I became concerned that our understanding of the word was out of date and not one with “shared intent” within the organisation. I therefore undertook to do an MA in Spirituality at Heythrop College with the University of London in 1999 and during that time learned even more significantly that the word spirituality is recognised as a global and growing area of confusion.

During my MA, in discussion with the Holton Lee’s Director Tony Heaton and several Trustees, we agreed that if we were to continue to develop an authentic and healthy spirituality, a “spirituality group” was needed. It was formed in 1999 with six people and began to meet monthly in order to take responsibility to oversee, develop and administer the Spirituality Aspect. But as we progressed we also continued to realise that significant research was also required to inform our development because we had begun to recognise that our concern for “developing the Personal Growth & Spirituality Aspect” involved much more than theory and was more complicated because its understanding was not just for us as individuals but a need for the whole organisation.

As we continued to ask our questions about how to develop spirituality at Holton Lee but within our wider global context, it became even more obvious that we weren't separate from this growing global confusion and so what seemed perhaps a more simple developmental need began to appear as a much more complex task, leading us to recognise, as an organisation, that both "research and development" were needed for sound academic theoretical understanding and underpinning. That is, we couldn't realistically develop the Spirituality Aspect until we understood what authentic and sound practice meant. We discussed an alternative option which was to remove the word "spirituality" from our mission and vision statement written ten years earlier when the word spirituality wasn't so confusing on a global scale, when it came more within the remit of theological study. We also recognised that our growing problem was that we had now become a secular Charity and organisation, which wanted to continue to operate in a manner which was consistent with its strong Christian roots and heritage. We were thus left with several realisations: *firstly*, that there wasn't a "corporate" or organisational understanding of both the significance of the problem or of a way forward; *secondly*, nor was there an off-the-shelf academic/theological resource or answer for us in our dilemma; *thirdly*, whatever we did about "spirituality" had to be done well or not at all since it was such a problem area; *fourthly*, as we discussed possible ways forward we realised afresh how spirituality itself is an essential undergirding aspect for the development and future of the whole organisation and its founding vision and so *fifthly*, we recognised that, if we were to proceed, we needed significant input or research in order to address this emerging awareness and growing concern. Therefore, instead of pursuing the PhD I was about to begin, I agreed instead to do a Doctorate with the National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships, at the University of Middlesex, because it facilitated "Research and Development" undertaken within one's own organisation, by Professionals, thus providing us with the academic rigour we needed in this confusing and emerging academic field, with two academic consultants available for supervision as the research project progressed, one for the field of spirituality and the other for the overall programme.

Spirituality itself is emerging as an academic field but also implicates and is mutually affected by the understanding within other academic fields which themselves also need further research and development, such as the field of research itself, organisations and workplaces and psychology, which I will address briefly under those headings below.

*a. Spirituality* is a legitimate academic and research discipline where we study the experiential interaction between the human and divine. (Principe, 1993:936) This was our subject matter and it therefore required sensory, intellectual and spiritual knowing since spirituality is understood through the lens of praxis, as we began our knowledge in the only place we could start it, that is, in the here and now of praxis, thus formulating our critique, interpretation and transformation. (Chopp, 1993: 756-763). Theologian Sandra Schneiders integrates human experience with spirituality by stating that spirituality is concerned with the interaction of the human spirit with the divine Spirit. The study of the spiritual life is self-implicating, because we do “experience” it with personal involvement, also through fieldwork practice and so are influenced by what we are studying and investigating. Such genuine understanding is transformative and the study of spirituality is very powerful. (Schneiders, 1994:14) In our research process we did experience that both our intellectual deciphering and subsequent appropriation has been a transformative praxis as we sought to live out a quality of life, which was informed by our past as we considered our future. This emerging field is difficult to “study”, understand and research and is often done on a “theoretical” level only, by academics in various disciplines or by theologians. To contribute to the field by developing “theory and practice” through a research process is seldom, if ever, done. There are books written “about” or “on” the practice of others but our research process was with “with” others within our enculturated practice and context with an ethnographic researcher/worker and founder working mutually with co-researchers.

*b. Research* about Spirituality is also itself an emerging academic field. We began to understand that the wider purpose of Participative Action Research is to contribute to the practical knowing and to the increased well-being – economic, political, psychological and spiritual – of human persons and communities to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology of the planet of which we are all an intrinsic part. Thus we bring together action and reflection in participation with others to pursue practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people with the flourishing of individuals and their communities. Its primary purpose and aim is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better freer world. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:2)

“There can be no doubt as to the significance, originality and importance of this project. As far as I am aware this is the first time that the methods of Participatory Action

Research have been applied to the topic of Spirituality in a context that views spirituality as an integral part of an enterprise that is grounded in the needs of society ... marking it out as a potentially groundbreaking enterprise.” (Professor Chris Clarke, one of the signatories of the Learning Agreement required for the Doctorate, wrote this sentence as part of his contribution.

*c. Organisation/workplace* There is also an emerging and developing academic field in the consideration of spirituality in the workplace, of management, education, leadership, which again is complex. I have outlined various perspectives and observations below.

“It has only been within the last decade that serious academic interest has been evident regarding the possible relevance of spirituality to organisations ... the world of academia recognises the importance of visionary organisational theory and a deepened view of basic core values ... realise the need for a higher purpose for organisational life than solely acquiring money and power ... the search for deeper meaning in work often leads to a spiritual insight or path, and sometimes a renewal or transformation of the work organisation itself” “We share the view that more scholarship is needed to demonstrate the importance of spirituality to organisations, visionary leadership and global economics.” (Biberman & Whitty, 2000: xvi, xii) However, a concern is that spirituality at work is in danger of reducing the profound topic of spirituality to elements appropriate for secular settings which is problematic since it is also highly personal. (Hogan, 2000:68-69)

Many popular books describe a “feel-good” spirituality with a collection of platitudes without a supporting component which mandates self-examination, self-discipline, study and sustained effort. Knowing motives and intention are key to prevent it becoming a fad, which would result in a lost opportunity to adopt a more holistic approach which could integrate thoughtful and scholarly ideas on individual and organisational behaviour, thereby being able to moderate some of the ills of the corporate culture, such as overwork, commodization of people and exploitation of the environment. Gibbons believes that researchers, consultants and practitioners must prevent this from happening and so need to be more precise in definitions, assumptions, theories and research methods in order to effect radical positive change for the future,



which depends on the commitment of people who are studying and practicing Spirituality at Work with distinctiveness and rigour. (Gibbons, 2000:111-129)

It is important to understand the driving forces linking spirituality and management in the workplace therefore we need a major body of knowledge related to spirituality in the workplace. New paradigms would consider social responsibility and serve the social good rather than market shares as the bottom line. Fostering an education perspective will help to produce a healthier society and unleash creativity for individuals and the organisational environment. (King et al, 2000:281-291) We need more rigour in how we theorise, research and teach spirituality lest it become a passing fad and do more harm than good. (Boje, 2000) Leadership and the spirituality of management is embodied within the structure rather than embodied in a person, seen instead as a process and product of complex nexus of interpersonal relationships. (Parffrey, web) A process of deep organisational and societal transformation is needed, one that bridges both personal and organisational levels. (Kreiger & Hanson, 2000:331-333)

d. *Psychological* understanding of the transpersonal and Spirituality is important. Paul Tosey from the Human Potential Research Group at the University of Surrey has flagged up important and crucial questions, cautions and suggestions which are: that credentials are needed for practitioners engaging in spirituality; that more research is needed in the field of practice since spirituality is apparently being psychologised and secularised especially within the business domain; experience and definitions of spirituality are being shaped within the business and organisational contexts and should be examined; a caution for spirit at work is that people are caught up in the enthusiasm for ideas about spirituality and soul without making connections to their own experiences. He suggests that research is needed not only on the spiritual dimension of learning organisations but wherever organisational development professionals are interested in spirituality, since very little has been written on this subject of a scholarly nature. He refers to spirituality as an energy which he believes is the best hope we have for creating organisations that feel alive and that spirituality can't be captured in words adequately and therefore images or metaphors can help since they have more than just purely descriptive function. (p.tosey@surrey.ac.uk. web paper)

### **3. An Overview of Other Significant Voices, Offering Further Contribution and Understanding about Spirituality**

Our realisation was that our pursuit to understand and embed spirituality praxis in our context could not be done in isolation, nor could it be separated from other Aspects of the work at Holton Lee. Our concern was that we didn't want to be insular and in danger of developing unsound theory, believing that our own thinking and context, as a Case Study, could provide all that we needed to develop authentic "theory and practice" in spirituality. Instead we had a growing awareness that we are not separate but are part of the whole, part of the modern dis-ease and part of those who could help to offer a way forward. As Soelle points out, "Everything that exists coexists and is bound up into a network of relationships that we call 'interdependence'. We need a mystical-ecological consciousness which knows itself to be woven together with all that exists, all that is can live and survive only in the coexistence of relationships." Love overcomes illusions of autonomy, self-sufficiency and the praxis of exclusion – already a hope of self-aware minorities. (Soelle, 2001:282-298). We live in an inter-personal relationship with our universe with what modern physics describes as a "complicated web of interdependent relationships." (Griffiths, 1989:78-95)

Since there is such continuing confusion, complexity and concern in current contemporary understanding of "spirituality", it is essential also to listen to and learn from the understanding, theory and opinions of the significant voices of others who are also living in and involved with the field within their various contexts and to dialogue with them. Doing so has helped us to more fully contextualise and address our own research needs, questions, concerns and purposes both at the beginning of the research process and then, in turn, has helped to inform our emerging practice and theory. They also help us all to understand the more broad important and urgent needs both within our context and wider culture, so we can all appropriately respond to the hopes and sufferings of our world. The problems are all interconnected and so collaboration within our global home also seems essential in order to find interconnected solutions. We recognised that there is both a need for caution as well as for some sort of common opinion and understanding since we are all confronted with our global, ecological, spiritual and social crises, which are also accompanied by a wave of interest in spirituality, as we seek to grapple with the deepest yearnings in our hearts.

Perhaps the best way to share and represent various voices is in the form of a table, which is in the Appendix Number 1. The key words, which emerged from the table, give us a sense of some of the difficulties and concerns in understanding contemporary spirituality. They are: competing and conflicting, foreign, purveyors of dubious wares, not a quick-fix, challenges easy spiritualities, misunderstanding, dubious claims, secularised and psychologised spirituality, dumb culture, spiritually ill, smorgasbord, taboo subject, politics, ecology, socio-economics, embodied in individuals, groups and organisations, accountability, patriarchal consciousness, interconnected, transformation, global justice and responsibility, compassion. It was these kind of challenges and concerns which confronted us at Holton Lee as we attempted to understand spirituality and bring about improvement in our own practice and the need for transformational action-orientated spirituality, a spirituality of collaboration, global spirituality, holistic spirituality, spiritual democracy, ecumenical spirituality and spirituality of organisational renewal, all within an “environment of love.”

#### **4. Improved Practice at Holton Lee and Other Organisations**

We were intending to improve our practice through “research and development”. We realised early on in the research process, that research itself has to do with “connected knowing”, that is, seeking to understand from within (Reason & Bradbury 2001:11) therefore we couldn’t share and write about something we did not “know”.

Consequently, our “embodied knowing” meant that we first had learn with our “selves” in an on-going way, with our own bodies, minds and souls, appreciating that wholeness was not linear perfection and that the living out of “spirituality” included an interdependence with the self, others, the earth and sacred. Nor was our inquiry into “spirituality” an individualistic activity, but instead, as we have seen, encompassed political, social, ecological and interpersonal concerns, “with” others. What we have learned and have written about is from our own experience and integrated perspectives, that is, with a “bottom-up theory”. The more we learned the more our “practice” was improved.

We now understand that, according to Au, *Holistic spirituality* links with every aspect of human development, psychological, spiritual, interpersonal and political lives, viewing spirituality as a particular way of being in the world, concerned with helping people to embody in a life-style the values they profess verbally. Thus it entails choices

and decisions about the way we spend our time, money and resources and issues around work, leisure, prayer, politics, sex and relationships. At Holton Lee Spirituality and Personal Growth are combined as one Aspect. Life is experienced by many people, at many levels, in various ways, every day, within our “secular” context and guests, visitors, staff, volunteers or trustees often say they do “experience” something which they can’t explain or finds words for, that “something more”. This happens in both “environments”, that is, within the landscape or within the buildings, as people relate, express their creativity, share meals, stories, friendship, care, humour or just through “being”. Holistic spirituality attempts to find an outlook that will integrate peoples’ lives sufficiently to give a sense of increasing wholeness and guide them in fashioning a concrete way of living out their spirituality. Enabling people to forge a more vital link between faith and daily life, a holistic approach to the spiritual life, helps to heal the dichotomies and divisions that have forced so many to be schizophrenic in living out religious beliefs, and helps to overcome this pernicious schizophrenia between soul, body, brain and heart and thus become more whole, which is precisely the vision and mission of Holton Lee. (Au, 1993: 488-491)

There are social, political and financial consequences to our increased spiritual awareness just as O’Murchu has pointed out earlier, in the initial guiding quotation, saying that we cannot be right with God unless we are right in our relationships with other creatures, the planet and the Cosmos, which requires a big paradigm shift from understanding our spiritual lives in individualistic terms towards one that embraces a wider reality, which is fundamental to authentic spirituality. This same understanding is the fruit of our research process, which has required us to go beyond our old understanding that God is only part of our lives in the overtly spiritual and sacred. Our spiritual search at Holton Lee will continue on in our meaningful relationships, connection and care for ourselves, each other, and the Earth as our understanding of God shifts within our wider reality on a daily basis. Spirituality is about living out totality of life, not in compartments or just in our thoughts or ideologies/theologies but in an embodied and connected way with justice, care and love; it is social and political since we are all part of each other.

Throughout our research journey, we have experienced what Schneiders stated about spirituality, that our study influenced us, was very powerful and our understanding was transformative therefore we also experienced an entry into the full breadth and depth of

the human and cosmic journey in all its realms: the psychological, social, cultural, political, economic, ecological and cosmological evolution and history of our world as we travel through this world as human persons. Our personal and communal spiritual journeys involve a commitment to the betterment of creation helping to bring about justice. Our spiritual journey is a mystery of grace and is only possible in relation to the ultimate horizon of the divine mystery, as God-with-us, since it is not a self-initiated, self-sustained, self-fulfilled journey. God empowers at each step. (Byrne, 1993:565-577)

These various perspectives outlined so far have supported the recognition of our need to do significant research on what spirituality praxis can mean. It is unusual for most Action Research Case Studies to have emerging generalisable and transferable theories and principles, particularly without compromising one for the other. However, our Participative Action Research project, conducted over a three year period, had to take our understanding much deeper, because of our need to create a significant undergirding theory for our practice. Therefore the end result is that we have been able to extrapolate theory from what “has” happened, rather than just develop “theory” about what “could” happen, something which is important since we are as a society in danger of haphazard influences from all sorts of self-styled, isolated and “supposed” authorities in the field of spirituality. Instead, we sought to have our emerging theory informed by others in the field, so we weren’t isolated and self-styled with a separate ideology which would be unsound; subsequently we feel more confident to share our findings and understanding with others.

For many the spiritual search happens “outside of the sanctuary” of the institutionalised church or organised religion but as we have read spirituality has a wide berth today. Having enough “room for all” is an especially important point for us at Holton Lee because of our policy to include “all” people, which also has presented us with great challenge in our search for an authentic spirituality praxis, that is, how to welcome and interface with people from other faiths, religions, New Age, agnostics, atheists or pagans. We say that we offer “equal opportunity” and try to combat discrimination, imbalances, injustices, under representation or exclusion and try to get rid of discriminatory barriers, tackling underlying reasons why some groups are not promoted. Younge wrote that to be effective diversity must make a difference by offering people more opportunities to fulfil their potential and in so doing radically alter the institution

that previously excluded them. (Younge, 2002) That is what spirituality practice is about.

During our research process we began to become more and more aware of the reality and understanding which Faith Lees wrote about our vision (Chapter One) and which physicist Zohar underpins, stating that our “successful worldview must draw in levels of the personal, social and spiritual into one coherent whole so the world will not fragment and the success or failure rests ultimately with the individual ... with the understanding that the extent to which we are physically interwoven requires a revolution in our whole way of perceiving ourselves and our relation with others” (Zohar, 1991:216,133-134) Together in our considerations about what “spirituality” means, we began to recognise more deeply that life is not made up of separate Aspects or ingredients because we are in relationship with other creatures, the planet and Cosmos. The spiritual journey involves a big paradigm shift from understanding our spiritual life in very personal individualistic terms towards one that embraces a wider reality, fundamental to authentic spirituality.” (O’Murchu, 2002: 20-21)

It will be shown by this study that as we lived out the research journey, our practice was further improved and we began to recognise the fact that we ourselves were actually in the midst of living out a paradigm shift, individually and as an organisation, a shift in which we will continue to remain as long as we continue to try to embrace and live out an authentic spirituality at Holton Lee, because it requires us to move beyond personal terms towards one that embraces our wider global reality. Perhaps in listening to and embracing the various perspectives of the “voices” above we can now recognise the topic or subject matter of “spirituality” is very complex indeed because it affects us all personally and in our relationships with self, others, God and our earth. The context is broad and includes “all” of our daily lives so the concerns are not just personal or individualistic but have to do with how we can authentically play our part in our global home. Perhaps Holton Lee can in some small way also contribute to contemporary understanding as a living model as an outreaching organisation.

An illustration of our meaning and experience is reflected below in summary points of what Tony, the director, one of the co-researchers, has highlighted in his second person writing.

- Positive unconditional regard and support is received from those who have responded to the ethos of Holton Lee, who experience the team work that has developed as a result of working within our aims and ethos, for people not profit, for marginalized and discriminated against people.
- It takes time to develop deep democracy; you need patience, creativity of thinking, a determination to listen and an acceptance that there are different ways to the same place.
- “We don’t provide a product that our guests and visitors consume, they take part in our lives, join our community. And the feedback they give us is a great reward and confirmation that what we are doing is groundbreaking, important and different to existing provision. “This is how we establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within our praxis.”
- The calm, peace and sense of refuge of Holton Lee is not easy to achieve, for the staff and volunteers; it demands discipline, uncompromising standards and a high degree of commitment to service. It can be very difficult to find personnel who can capture the vision and work within and for it. We are a community, a loose collective, and it has been necessary to frame the organisation with a set of policies that are continuously reviewed. This takes time and energy, to respond and change, to meet the demands within the four aspects, to sift and distil what is out there, happening within the world around us and how we can and should respond to it, within our aims, ethos and mission.
- Simple practical issues like making all our buildings and services as accessible as possible, meeting the individual needs of guests by having open and honest dialogue, through feedback forms and discussing with individuals and organisations about what they need from us and what we need from them, simply allowing people to play an active part in their own destiny. Our job is not to control them within the constraints of our organisational structure but to enable them within a flexible structure built around our guiding principles.
- The paradox is that by working in this way it becomes very difficult to define and categorise Holton Lee. We have to explain that we work to create a fully inclusive environment so all can have as equal an opportunity as possible to enjoy what we work to provide.
- Equal access means people can more readily achieve their potential. People can join in, if they wish, with all that takes place. The fact is that we are founded on Christian principles, but Christians, Buddhists, Atheists and Agnostics all manage to work together within our self-regulated system. Consequently we hope all will feel welcome within our ethos, based as it is on Christian principles.
- We will continue the journey we have already embarked on. The four fundamental aspects of the arts, disability, the environment, personal growth and spirituality will remain – the personnel will change as they already have and we remain optimistic that they will be replaced by others who have been touched by the vision or seen the way the organisation works and wish to help.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

In this chapter we will explore the context for the “research and development” project by *firstly*, learning about background information on the origins of Holton Lee; *secondly*, by understanding the founding vision and mission and then *thirdly*, by considering in some depth and detail, the scale and scope of the current work/practice. Within the Research design the understanding of the history of Holton Lee can be referred to as “*THE THEN*”, the research process and current praxis as “*THE NOW*” and “*THE TOMMORROW*” describes/considers outcomes for Holton Lee and others.

#### **Background Information on Origins of Holton Lee**

In some respects it doesn’t really matter whether we start this historical account or narrative from its beginning in 1945 or from the present in 2003 because the thread which connects the fifty-seven years provides the continuity. That thread is Love, with the understanding that there is faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love. It is a story which is difficult to put into “words” since it is about people who were determined to live out their lives in the spirit of love.

Sir Thomas Lee’ mother, Lady Madeline Lees, wrote in 1945 that, “My constant and earnest prayer is that this place should be used entirely for the glory of God.” This place refers to the Lee’s estate, which includes Post Green House and Holton Lee. Tom married Faith on 12 March 1929. The whole Lees’ family were very committed to love and care for others and over the years welcomed many people into their home to share life with them. In the 1950’s Lady Madeline wrote and produced *The Nativity Play*, which was also sold so others could produce it in their own areas. Then along with help from Tom and Faith, she produced two gospel films based on the principles of Oberamagau, using local villagers as cast. These two films, one produced in 1955, *A Voice in the Wilderness* and *The Messiah*, in 1960, continue to be shown in various parts of the world.

Together with Jeanne Hinton, Tom and Faith Lees then founded Post Green Community. Its founding vision and theology was as a “city of refuge”. Members



attempted to live out the understanding of Isaiah 42: to serve the cause of the right, to open the eyes of the blind, free captives from prison, and those who live in darkness, also to clothe the poor, welcome strangers into your home. Also as stated in Isaiah 61, the understanding was that the community was anointed to bring good news to the poor and bind up hearts that were broken, to proclaim liberty to captives. Lady Faith Lees wrote her first book in 1978, with Jeanne Hinton, called *Love is Our Home*, which told the story of Post Green Community, as a healing, caring, and teaching lay Christian ecumenical community formally established in 1975 which for many years had about one hundred and thirty five members in fourteen households. Its founding mission was to create an environment where people could live out a loving commitment to one another and be able to use their gifts for others. The community attempted to make love their aim, recognising that, as one of its members Rev. Reg East stated in the Service of Commitment in 1975, which the Bishop of Salisbury presided over, that “it is not until we learn to love that we begin to savour the really deep rich things that belong to the human personality. The loveliest things of the human personality can come to birth and surprisingly in oneself. It is in growing together in love that matters ... not when things are going easily and smoothly that the love of God flows. It’s when we are coming to grips with each other and it’s very hard when the bottom seems to have fallen out of our community life ... we are determined that we shall love.” Post Green had an active “ministry” of teaching, and caring which included a national and international outreach of teaching, both through publications of books, booklets, running courses and also through writing music, producing records and with a music group which travelled by invitation. In 1976 Post Green Community and the Community of Celebration merged and then separated again in 1984 in order to pursue their own distinctive ministries. Post Green Pastoral Centre was formed in 1984 to take responsibility for residential care, retreats, pastoral teaching and counselling. During those years as a community we partnered significantly and met regularly with twelve or more other communities from the USA, UK and Europe.

Post Green Community then conceived of Holton Lee in 1990 and established it as a Charity in 1992. In order for the community to consider this next phase, a process of discerning and decision-making took place over a period of several years, with the guidance of the community's "Spiritual Director", the Rev Brian Hawker. As previously

stated Holton Lee's mission is: "...empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality." As previously outlined in Chapter One, in 1993 Lady Faith Lees wrote of our corporate vision: "We expect Holton Lee to be a centre to which people can come to discover new and innovative approaches, whether it be in practical matters or in ways of integrating the spiritual, psychological and physical aspects of their lives. After years of separating

out and compartmentalising people, making a division between science and religion, able-bodied and disabled, creative and practical, we believe that Holton Lee will demonstrate a holistic and therefore a healing view of life."

It is important to understand the uniqueness of Holton Lee's foundation, because the type of commitment and care demonstrated throughout its long-standing history as a lived out reality gives Holton Lee the credibility it has today. It was not built on "good ideas" or theory only, but was established on the actual living out and practice, both in the distant and more recent past, where theory and practice, that is, theology and loving, combined to inform each other at every step within an ethos of care and love both for people and for the land. It is not a "project" recently conceived of and thought up for business purposes, but rather a living reality, which can be recognised, as having been "lived" and as one which is still actually taking place, with a quality of life in which many lives are changed as a result. In the present day Holton Lee attempts to carry on the same ethos and quality of loving and relating, albeit within a different context, two miles away, with different people, structures and organisation. Holton Lee, as a secular Charity has, none the less, the same vision, tapestry, organic entity and substance of life. It continues to work in partnership with the Lees family; Sarah the Chair and Bridget the Vice-chair of the Trustees are both children of Tom and Faith.

Sir Thomas Lees wrote an article published in "Dorset Life Magazine" in 1998, that the land, where Holton Lee is located, has been in the ownership of his family since the



1890's and they have always recognised that East Holton is a special place and very precious. He has always felt that the land, 350 acres, has to be preserved whole and not split up or sold off; he wrote that in fact a microcosm of the whole of creation is there to be discovered if you care to look. He believes that the land doesn't belong to us but that we belong to the land, since she is our Mother; it may change and adapt to changing forces yet it remains part of the primal creation and it can put us in touch with a spiritual and primal force.

In an interview for GrassRoots Magazine in 1984 with theologian Dr Andrew Kirk, Tom said that he thought that the shape of leadership in the world is like a pyramid where you fight in order to get to the top but that it is a very lonely place there with room only for one person who is constantly threatened in their position. He believes instead that leadership needs to be turned upside-down, with a broad shared position at the base with a common

commitment and vision, not with a power struggle. Faith added that then what God does is far bigger than the little that any of us does as individuals. These statements reflect the premise of their lives. The fruit of their belief and action, that is the wedding of their theory and practice, is the fact that we have Holton Lee. It is both a concept and vision, but also a place and piece of land, with 350 acres, much of which Tom organised to be donated to Holton Lee, the Charity he founded to manage it. Post Green Community Trust initially managed Holton Lee but then as the community became smaller the structures had to change accordingly. Tom's thoughts about "upside-down leadership" are also developed in more depth in his book, titled "*Another Man*", written in 1980. In summary he states that the model of leadership is one of a pyramid up-side down, inverted with the leader at the bottom as servant of others. From that position he/she invites others to share the leadership. Such leaders have some maturity and vision to see where things are going and how to get there and such sharing calls maturity from others. It is not primarily functional but more dependent on an example of life which others can follow since others recognise one is there oneself. Corporate leadership is like a honeycomb; you cannot remove one cell without doing damage to six others. Such leaders also have taken the vision to themselves and made it part of themselves; they lay aside their own ideas, prejudices and desires. They must be in complete unity, have a common mind and lead by their life

and example. It is not something which can be demanded of anyone but is freely given; it is dynamic and organic and therefore it is impossible to make rules and regulations about it. Once the corporate leadership is exercised the vision itself becomes dynamic, needing re-defining and new expression. Its aim is also to raise others to an equal place which requires one to be willing to listen to one another, a commitment not to withdraw and separate oneself and thus stimulate the same commitment from others. Tom states that what he is describing is not a theory but people he knows. The function of such leadership is helping people to share in a vision not getting them to obey. As such, leaders invite others to share servanthood at the bottom of the pyramid; those people then naturally become leaders themselves, motivated in the same way. There is no competition, the pyramid changes shape as the apex enlarges and more and more people are drawn in to share and thus by reason of who they are become qualified to lead. (Lees, Hinton, 1980) More understanding about leadership will be developed in Chapter Six.

### **Founding “theory” of Holton Lee**

In order to further contextualise this research project I will give a brief description of some of the theory and understanding of Holton Lee in *The Now* of the present day. The words “Holton Lee” have similar meaning to the “City of Refuge”, the founding concept of Post Green. Holton means “Farmstead on a spur of land” and Lee means “a place, a wood or woodland clearing” or in sailing terms a “lee” is a place of refuge, a safe port in a storm. In our literature we describe it as short stay residential centre primarily for Disabled people and carers and its overarching philosophy is to confront the fact that inaccessibility in all forms is the major disabling factor in people’s lives and so Holton Lee responds to this by working to create a barrier-free environment and as high a standard of personal care and intervention as is required by each individual, with access to the entire site and all that Holton Lee has to offer. The “business” of Holton Lee is that of ensuring that all our guests and visitors are given the freedom to make choices about how they use their time here. They are encouraged to be what they want to be: “to step out of a cage.”



Four Aspects

Our Mission states that we work to empower and resource disabled people through an integration of the Aspects of Creativity, Environmental awareness and Personal Growth/Spirituality:

- **Arts and Creativity** –Artistic or creative potential is stimulated and encouraged both as a form of personal creativity and expression and as a means for self discovery. Often people leave much the richer with new found gifts and talent, which they can continue to develop.
- **Disabled People and Carers** – Because Holton Lee recognises that inaccessibility is a major disabling factor we are working to create a barrier free environment, with a very high standard of Personal Assistance available to ensure that guests with impairments are more fully able to enjoy their stay.
- **The Environment/Land Management** – There is an opportunity for guests to observe, explore and enjoy this unique and diversely rich site with different habitats of woodland, reedbed, heathland and saltmarsh and their unique flora and fauna.
- **Spirituality/Personal Growth** – Through various optional activities guests are empowered to discover their own potential often through an encounter with the natural environment, exploring creativity or having access to Counselling or Spiritual Direction.

*Holton Lee welcomes all people.*

The overlapping circles depict the interface and mutuality of the four aspects.



Figure 2 – Four Aspects

Our intention has always been to “live” out the integration of the Four Aspects, not separating them out. “People” visit Holton Lee, that is, non-disabled and disabled people who are accommodated within the *internal* built environment and enjoy access to the *external* natural environment. There are art exhibitions and arts facilities which combined with the stimulus of the environment and relationships with others, often results in artistic creation. Theory within each of the Four Aspects is continually being developed and updated in response to the growing and developing broader needs of society and also in relationship to each other at Holton Lee, both in theory and in integrated practice. This research Project has specifically considered “spirituality” in relationship to the Arts, Disability and the Environment as well as a deeper understanding of Spirituality itself as it, in turn, continues to be informed by the other three Aspects, both in theory and practice. The Project has also named and “developed” theory as it emerged, which will be explained in more depth in Chapter Six.

### **Founding Vision and Mission**

Holton Lee’s founding principles and theory/theology cannot be “researched”, outlined, shared and owned simply as “theory” or ideas. Rather they must be deeply understood and embodied before they can be “lived out”, since only in this way can they actually inform the practice and subsequent on-going, emerging and living theory of this “Research and Development” Project. Only such integrated theory and practice can be in keeping with the history lived out and with the founding “vision” conceived of in 1990 and still be relevant for current praxis. It is therefore particularly important to understand the meaning of the word “vision” and what is involved in bringing one into being.

Covey and Merrill wrote about shared vision. In their experience many organisations don’t have a sense of shared vision; there is no passion, no deep burning “yes” in the organisation even though there may be a mission statement hanging on the wall, as a statement which came down through the organisation from the executive offices. Conversely the passion created by shared vision creates synergistic empowerment, unleashing and combining energy, talent and capacities of all involved. “Creating shared vision produces its own order; trying to control produces the opposite effect – dysfunctional disorder or chaos.” Shared vision becomes the constitution and criterion for decision making in the group, bonding them together and giving them a sense of

unity and purpose and has a profound effect on the quality of life because we become contributing parts of a greater whole where, “we can live, love, learn and leave powerful legacies together.” They believe creating a shared vision requires four conditions: that there are enough people, who are fully informed, and are interacting freely and synergistically, in an environment of high trust. Empowering mission statements then come from the minds and hearts of everyone involved – not as an executive decree. With a shared vision we see the value of synergistic roles and goals, seeing our roles as parts of a highly interrelated and interdependent whole. The end result of a process of creating a shared vision changes our relationships with others who are part of it and transforms the quality of our lives. (Covey & Merrill, 1994:216-222)

The vision we now see lived out, in part, at Holton Lee, as an organic product, is the fruit of our working co-operatively with God, just as Faith wrote in 1987 in her book *Becoming the Kingdom*. In it she outlined various ingredients and principles, which she felt, must be considered in order to bring a vision into reality. She explained how to go about “creating whatever it is one wants to see formed” and believed that, in order to do this, it is necessary to communicate, “at the two levels of one’s intellect and of one’s feelings”. Faith used images or metaphors in order to try to convey her understanding about how to develop a vision. One was that of a blueprint, another of a tapestry but in the end she preferred the idea of an “embryo” which is even more organic than an evolving tapestry because an ‘embryo’ turns into someone with whom one can interact and in whose development we can continue to be a part. That is why for her, ‘embryo’, felt like a good descriptive word for the type of vision that she believed we could work out with God. (pp: 52-53) Much of what Faith wrote about and described then can now be recognised as founding principles for the current quality of life and practice at Holton Lee, which, for her, included an appreciation of our wider global home. Obviously Holton Lee is only part of our world, a world, which Faith saw, was “determined on a course of self-destruction”, so she suggested that we should try to understand how we can co-operate with God in bringing about a future of hope instead. She believed that we need to be people of vision, in a world full of despair, poverty and under threat of nuclear destruction, people who can think ahead creatively and work to shape the future, not sitting back in resigned fashion. (Lees, 1987)

Holton Lee’s founding vision, theology, principles and guidelines are thus very particular and specific and it is upon this understanding that the organisation was

established and our research task was to continue to secure these particular foundations. Now, in the spring of 2003, during the war with Iraq, this understanding still seems particularly relevant.

### **Founding Principles Necessary for the Spiritual Life**

We needed to be able to discern whether our continuing “research and development” of a contemporary spirituality praxis at Holton Lee was in line with the original theology and ethos of care and love because this place and life began fifty-seven years ago. Therefore the specific aim and objective of this research was to consider how to continue along the same path with the same thread of love and therefore to develop a contemporary understanding and quality of life, being able to link the past with the present, so that the original intention and theological understanding were not lost but were and are able to inform our present and future development. These founding principles are in fact the roots of our present tree; roots are important for the kind of fruit a tree produces provided they are in appropriate soil!! If we aren’t aware then we are in danger of our tree ending up as a hybrid or with bad fruit. However, since “spirituality” is such a nebulous subject it is always difficult to gauge how significantly our development and practice is actually in keeping with the founding ethos. We can only know by the fruits if there is a quality of life which has the same hallmarks of love and care. In the same way the outcomes and impacts of the “research and development” will be known by its fruits, that is, how well we are able to “live” out those principles of love and care for ourselves, others, God and our land, that is, our global earth home. The principles and theology, which Faith believed and wrote about, are still important and relevant for us today to embrace and embody, even within our “secular” organisation, so that we can continue to create a loving environment and spirituality praxis at Holton Lee, provided we are determined as an organisation to be consistent with the founding quality of life.

### **Key Foundational Principles**

#### ***Tom’s principles in summary are:***

Tom wrote about vision in his book saying that a leader must have a vision before him/her of the end product of what he/she wants to achieve, a plan and purpose which



people can be drawn into. It also needs to be practical, related to the possibilities and to the resources and capable of achievement. It is also something which evolves. But it also carries within itself a sense of calling, of something outside itself and it must remain alive and vibrant and possible in line with the realities of the situation. He/she must be also be able to communicate this vision which is something very difficult to do. For Post Green this was because there are no rules except the rule to love one another and stay in fellowship. It is so much easier to convey rules and set boundaries on behaviour. How do you convey a fluid principle? It seems there is no way except by example, continually holding before people a lived-out picture of what one is about. The visionary then begins to share the vision. It is then important not to let it get watered down from the vision God gave. (Lees, Hinton, 1980)

***Faith's principles in summary are:***

- to be in tune with the whole of ourselves
- holiness equals true responsibility where “we” choose
- not “think” for others but listen with patience so we don’t squeeze them into decisions
- God’s peace is not the same as the world’s peace
- Let God’s love and wisdom shape our picture so we can understand people and situations
- We need new views of all that God is doing in the power of love to move beyond doctrinally narrow channels
- This love is taught and demonstrated by our behaviour and way of life – not regarding people only from a human point of view
- Such love and acceptance doesn’t just happen; we need to be able to deal with past prejudices, defence mechanisms, fears, cultural biases and take responsibility to change our deep rooted attitudes which can oppress others.
- Therefore we first have to know God’s love and acceptance in ourselves with both our mind and feelings so we can love our neighbours as ourselves
- With an attitude of respect so we can’t impose our culture or ideas on others.
- And no longer live our lives in isolation

## *Vision*

- Vision goes beyond concepts therefore it is difficult to verbalise or be rational, logical or objective about it.
- We have to keep our eyes on it because there is a danger of living a fantasy instead
- Put energy into it, to bring hope into reality, something solid and concrete
- Be active and full participants in relationship to the vision so we can live it out totally involved with it from the depths of our being.
- Not a static picture but organically growing
- Love is the environment for hope and faith which can change a vision from dreams or fantasy into a solid shape
- It happens when realism and hope go hand in hand; then we can stand up for justice and peace and help re-establish a society capable of supporting a healthy loving environment
- The future and today have to be integrated in the day-to-day work
- Count the cost beforehand
- Wisdom, patience and tolerance are essential when other people are part of “today” when sharing decisions, which takes a long time to work out
- It is easy to “talk” about God and vision BUT we need to be practical, down to earth and get on with the job.
- Relationships are how we get there and how you get there is as important as where you go.
- People are always part of a vision that is truly God’s.
- A vision to provide refuge is costly because you have to find emotional room for people in your heart.
- The cost is learning how to be open and honest for the environment we create to bring life through life-giving relationships where commitment happens not only through talking but through loving because that is what people feel and understand
- Feelings and thoughts must be integrated so what we “do” and say don’t cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation since there is no gap between the love we profess and the reality of what we “live out”.

- Then our vision can become a living reality, that is, to create an environment of love, where people can feel *and* understand love at all levels, with heads, minds and spirit, as we are living it out on a daily level so people can “experience” it with all of their being and therefore don’t easily forget it.
- We therefore embody the vision and the tangible nature of such love is necessary today in an age of searching, self-discovery and scientific discovery.
- People who are “visionaries” actually “are” what they are “talking about”, committed to live life in love
- In this way a vision doesn’t crush people but models a trusting love
- As a shared vision grows so do all those involved if the original spirit and quality of life is continued
- Otherwise much of the original challenge and inspiration can be frozen in very ordinary structured lives which cannot manage to keep the life active and thrusting forward and so there is a great difference between what was hoped for and what is being lived out.
- In living a vision you need a unity of movement, action and change in the journey together, seeing with an inner eye in a re-creative power of love which sees others’ potential with an inner eye, not through theoretical help but with the authority of first-hand experience, therefore wanting the best for others.

The principles outlined above are very similar to those which became highlighted throughout the research project in the current extensive literature review on contemporary spirituality, therefore adding underpinning to the founding Theology. These ideas will be further explored in Chapter Six.

We can now understand that life and all decisions made at Holton Lee should be consistent with the founding vision of which we all are stewards. It is not a recent project or vision; we have been entrusted with a legacy, not a business proposition, and have to trust that God will continue to inspire the hearts of those currently involved in such a way that the founding vision can be carried forward, if our hearts are willing to hear the call. Faith herself asked in the postscript of her book, if the vision was ever theirs, saying that things are never quite what they seem – life is never cut and dried but full of surprises and even in the writing of her book she had to let the writing happen to her, that is to “let go and let God”. She herself felt this was like growing up with God where she had to experience the truth of dying to her own investment in something and

see God bring it into being in his own way, in that way therefore, the vision must be totally one's own and at the same time totally God's. She believed that God is preparing people who have their senses alert and that there are signs of hope in that people are learning how to love each other. She wrote that, "You can know hope when you begin to realise that your eyes and heart are beginning to pick up new and wonderful signs of life bubbling up in unexpected places." We are created to be alive within; this love within us gives us eyes to see God's vision for the future. (Lees, 1987) (NB: a fuller version of Faith's writing is included in the background study for this research project and is available at Holton Lee.)

### ***Five and Twenty years on***

Then in 1996, two months before she died, Faith wrote two papers about her understanding of what would be needed for Holton Lee to progress, that is, how to fulfil the vision by putting it into practice. She combined hope and practice. One paper outlined a five-year plan and the other a twenty-year plan which are summarized below. Copies of her papers are included in the Appendix number 2.

Faith wrote that within ***Five Years***, the plans, which we made and committed ourselves to five years ago for Holton Lee should be complete and fulfilled. She expected that there would be all the necessary buildings to fulfil the caring and teaching mission and that Holton Lee would be running as a viable financial undertaking with sufficient beds to maintain this. There would be sufficient space for study and enjoyment of the natural habitats, room for quiet reflection and quiet services for those who want them, a multi-purpose hall to enable the scope for dancing, acting, music-making, art, sculpture and public viewing of all of the above. There would be sufficient personnel working efficiently and gently to produce the ethos, having members trained in spiritual and secular methods, with a management structure in place which will enable this to happen, having to appoint someone if necessary who will work sensitively and sensibly with the Trustees as Project Manager/Director. She believed that the ecological, environmental and medical (caring) aspects should have someone appointed to be working in them with responsibility to integrate it with the spiritual and counselling aspect. Also all those with these various responsibilities should be given the resources through fund-raising.

## Update and Interpretation since 1996

Current reality and practice/praxis is that we have been financially viable through significant fund raising efforts each year. We do have accommodation for twenty-seven people on the site in The Barn and the three Cottages. Faith House, named after Faith Lees, provides a room for quiet reflection, which can also be used for services for those who want them. There is also a multi-purpose hall enabling dancing, acting, music making, art, sculpture and public viewing. The Farm House, adjacent to Faith House also provides rooms for seminars and group meetings. There are now nine Trustees, twenty staff and nine frequent/weekly volunteers along with three volunteer groups who come regularly full and part time. That is, “significant personnel working effectively and gently to produce the ethos”.

Several in the spirituality group are trained in spiritual guidance and secular methods of counselling and help to oversee the provision and understanding for counselling, spiritual guidance and retreat work for guests. Our management structure has changed through the course of this research which further enables the context/environment for such authentic and holistic praxis. Holton Lee “did” appoint Tony as Director in 1997. As stated in his interview and writing, he has worked to Faith’s papers on the vision, attempting to fulfil and enable the vision to become reality in practice. He is also an artist and his “work” at Holton Lee seems quite like a permanent “art installation”. There are staff members appointed for each “Aspect Group” and they each also work with a group, who have responsibility to integrate their “Aspect” with the other “Aspects”. We have an active fund-raising group particularly because Holton Lee has to rely significantly on grant making Trusts in order to keep financially viable. For instance the shortfall for 2003/2004 is £135,000. Also each Aspect Group has some responsibility to try to raise funds for their own on-going financial needs.

Faith’s paper about her understanding for “*Twenty Years*” was that Holton Lee would be a well-established centre of learning in integrated studies on ecological, environmental, spiritual aspects and therefore would be a healing centre. She referred to it as a “Centre of Excellence” meaning a quality of everything that is necessary if it is to be a teaching centre both nationally and internationally, in the various recognised fields or aspects of medical (caring), ecological, environmental, artistic expression, theological, counselling and spiritual direction. In the *Medical (caring)*, which included

social welfare, we would have the most up-to-date equipment and thinking on how to enable guests to become self-managing and to help them to reach their potential. In the *Ecological* we would be in touch with the new feasible ways of using natural energy from the sun, wind, waste disposal and horticulture. In the *Environmental* aspects we would be in touch with the different fields of natural studies with the RSPB, botanical studies, marine studies which are relevant to the area in which Holton Lee is situated and the health land, Poole Harbour, the Ocean and the English Channel, the air, urban development and waste disposal. With *Artistic* expression she thought that the enabling of art in every form of artistic expression is a fundamental principle of Holton Lee. It could be expressed through the natural beauty of the environment, visual arts, dance, drama, music and perhaps first through the architecture and its ability to understand the spatial beauty of the site and its sense of light, freedom and space. *Theologically* we should be in touch with international theological thinking on world issues and how to deal with injustice in all areas, including financial injustice, mega business and impoverished economies, issues on war and intervention from outside and tie this up with creation and healing. Her understanding of Counselling and Spiritual Direction was that we must be accredited and up-to-date with both and with all the different ways of looking at them with an eclectic approach to all of it not insisting that OUR way is right. She asked if we need also to think of adding outdoor activities, such as horse riding, sailing, archery and so on and asked if that in twenty years time it might be time for an underground part of the building as contemplated with our architects at the beginning.

In the last two years of her life Faith, along with others in Post Green Community, worked tirelessly in order to find adequate funding to proceed. This was particularly focused on the Arts Lottery and finally just after her death in 1996 the result was that we were part funded by the Arts Lottery to undertake a *Feasibility Study*, to develop the brief for our future development, an architectural feasibility study by Tony Fretton, Architect, and a fund-raising strategy. This was supported by market research to acknowledge the need for our provision. Follow up action on these studies has further helped us to be a “healing centre, centre of learning, centre of excellence, teaching centre”. This is particularly due to the fact that we have gone a long way towards integrating the Environmental/ecological, Arts/Creativity, Disability/Care and Personal Growth/Spiritual with Theological understanding, developing a quality within each Aspect as well as a mutuality between them.

**Current Practice at Holton Lee**

I will now outline our current practice in more detail and then include data from interviews of people who represent a broad spectrum of voices and experience at Holton Lee. Thereby this section is not only descriptive but provides an indication and evaluation of our success through the personal experiences they share.

Holton Lee has accessible accommodation for nine guests within The Barn where registered Care is offered as requested. It is now in the process of being extended to have en-suite accommodation for 12 guests. The extension will house the dining area, a new kitchen, laundry and reception. The quality of service is endorsed by the Service Level Agreements obtained from 10 Local Authority Social Service Departments throughout the country.

We also have three Cottages which can be hired either by individuals or groups; a camping field and a large toilet block for groups to camp on site, a large Arts Pavilion where creative arts activities take place contains a good range of equipment, for guests

and groups to use. Faith House opened in February 2002; the Dedication Service was on 27<sup>th</sup> April and the Official Grand Opening was on 6<sup>th</sup> September. Now, with the development of the Artist Studios we hope that the two buildings will work together to hold some major

national exhibitions. Faith House has a quiet room and a large conference/exhibition room or it can be used for functions and events. It can accommodate up to fifty people. Faith



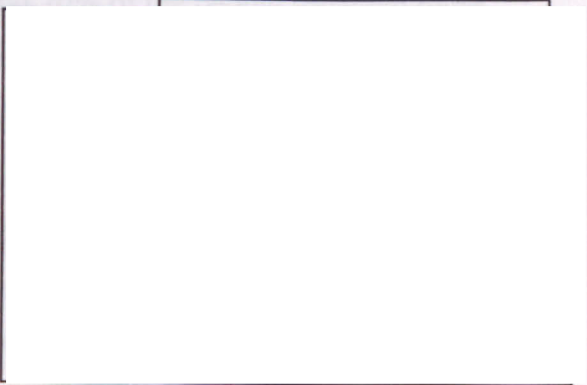
House is a land mark building and as such has had very positive reviews in the September edition of “Architecture Today” and a large spread in the Guardian Newspaper who called it “a magic box – low key and low cost but a few moments inside will change your life.” The article describes it “ as one of the most beautiful new buildings in Britain, an inspiring and refined design, cloister-quiet, with a subtle emotional power, it is one of those magical buildings with the power to transform the way you feel ... for the better”. The adjacent Farm House will be extended to house a National Disability Arts Archive. There are three rooms all ideal for off-site meetings, training and exhibitions.



The old Stables which have been used for the past several years by a local College to make furniture as part of a project called, “In 2 work Social Firm”, has recently been completely re-designed by the Faith House architect, Tony Fretton and will shortly be re

-built to provide accommodation for Disabled Artists in Residence, with four studios and a common room. It was funded by The Arts Council South West and the Arts Council South East. The Dutch Barn provides accessible outdoor “shelter” for study or evening entertainment.

East Holton Pony Carriage Driving Centre is governed by the RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) and is located at Holton Lee and offers driving for our guests as well as disabled people from other organisations. On site heather honey and hardwood charcoal is both produced and sold.



Over the years we have produced in-house, several substantial educational packs/booklets with text and coloured photographs so guests can make the most of their stay at Holton Lee. The booklets include: Habitat Management and Ecology, Flora and Fauna of Holton Lee, Trails and Walks around Holton Lee, Trees at Holton Lee,



Gateway Wildlife Garden and Sir Thomas Lees explains what Holton Lee means to him.

Holton Lee is situated in a site of great ecological significance, lying between the English Nature Reserve and the Poole Harbour Special Site of Scientific Interest at Lytchett Bay. Much of the 350 acres is designated as a Special Site of Scientific Interest, with 70 acres of Reedbed, 6 acres of Woodland and 48 Acres of recently restored Heathland. It is a quiet site bounded by Poole Harbour and Holton Heath National Nature Reserve. The site is being carefully managed so the wildlife has the best possible chance to flourish. We work to a Management Plan which was written in conjunction with English Nature, as part of its Wildlife Enhancement Scheme and the RSPB, who will update the Management Plan and Dorset Wildlife Trust, all who assist in funding Holton Lee's management and help to identify which communities and species present are of particular conservation interest because of their scarcity or vulnerability. The land itself at Holton Lee obviously plays a prominent part in our spirituality praxis; landscape and spirituality are frequently intertwined in the history of Christian faith, since an experience of God is often recognised in an experience of place. The experience of the holy is perceived where heaven, earth, sacred and profane intersect, in divine-human encounter. (Lane, 1992:2-4)

Our "audience" is growing and our statistics show that in 1999/2000 we had 1839 residential guests, 7,500 visits, 2,500 enquiries and 20% of the people travelled more than fifty miles. We had 1927 residential guests in 2000/2001 and in 2001/2002 there were 1934, as outlined in the bednights chart in the Appendix number 3.

Our financial reality is that it costs approximately £1,000 per day to keep Holton Lee open. Each year we have had a large projected deficit budget; we begin this financial year in March 2003/2004 with one of £135,000.00. Spirituality is also practical. Various comments about money and finances were made in the interviews:

- *Liz said that one part of her thinks she is not at all worried about money because she has enough faith to believe that if we are meant to be here then it will be okay and another part of her thinks that is nonsense. That is why the human and spiritual have a bit of conflict because the human part of me believes you are going to have to "do" something about it otherwise it will all collapse, but then that indicates I don't have enough faith to see through what I believe in. (Liz was the organisations key fund raiser at that point.)*



- *Derek* said we have to find the faith to convince other people that Holton Lee is a good idea and special place so that they will support us financially. It needs to be run as a business but you also need the caring side coming across as well, so it is a juggling act.
- *Tony* said the Four Aspects working in harmony make this a very strong organisation and our challenge is to try and balance them out to ensure they can work in harmony, so that each Aspect is healthy and they are not competitive with each other, which is a big job, because of the funding and finances. Sometimes things just “happen” like someone wanting to give us money and in the end the amount given was exact to the penny with just £5.00 less or £5.00 of the price for the item they wanted to fund. A small trust turned up out of the blue the day after a key vehicle had died offering to fund something. Those are the things which are just not explainable and are a way above my consciousness. Perhaps I have just tuned into that? but I wouldn’t know where to begin to explain some of that. I am less worried about finances now than the first couple of years here when I kept thinking how am I going to keep pulling rabbits out of the hat to keep the money coming in and yet the longer I have been here the less I have worried about it. If there is such a positive attitude working toward this organisation being a success then you really do have to make an act of faith.
- *Tony* wrote in 2003 that the deficit budget exists because as a Charity we subsidise many of our services, in particular the real costs of providing full personal assistance and accommodation at the Barn is much higher than the charges we make (in many instances the local authority cap the amount they are prepared to pay when purchasing “respite” for Disabled people in their care.) Similarly we try to offer retreatants and groups with limited finances subsidised stays, whether in accommodation or using the camping field/farmhouse or Faith House. The budget is the actual costs we predict to operate Holton Lee within a twelve month period. We then assess the potential income we are likely to raise over the twelve-month period. The difference (deficit) is the amount we are short and is the amount we will need to raise funds to cover. This is just to run the operation. If we want to build buildings or buy equipment/employ staff we have to raise additional funds. These are the challenges of the fundraising team, not quite as difficult as turning water into wine but quite a challenge!!!!

After Faith House was completed on 22-24<sup>th</sup> February 2002, Holton Lee organised the 2<sup>nd</sup> national Disability Art conference titled “Disability Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - DA21”. It showed the work of five artists and central to each was the notion of Disability, in celebration, with irony, exploring myth

or exposing the stereotype, oppressions and psychology that surround Disability. The conference engaged many organisations and is illustrative of Holton Lee's involvement with the wider community.

Substantial internal developments have also occurred. The *2001 Annual Report*, notes, for instance, that: "Much of the year has been spent in establishing and fine-tuning a structured approach to the development and management of the organisation. Development and Management Groups have been set up. These now meet on a quarterly basis with support from Aspect Groups which reflect the interest of the Four Aspects of the organisation: Arts and Creativity, Disability and Carers, the Environment, Spirituality and Personal Growth. The new structure has led to many positive results including increased support for staff and volunteers and the formal involvement of individuals and organisations from the wider community who are interested in the work of Holton Lee. In particular different interest groups have begun to experience a real sense of belonging to the community of Holton Lee and contributing to its development. Discussions centre around how activities initiated by a particular Aspect Group can support or be supported by other activities or Groups. This integrated approach reflects the organisation's primary aim, which is to empower and resource, and both disabled and non-disabled participants have benefited from their participation in the new structure"

### **Praxis as Experienced Today at Holton Lee – a Summary of Key Principles which Emerged in the Interviews which Demonstrates Actual Experience**

The six people interviewed represent a cross section of involvement at Holton Lee. They are: Sir Tom Lees, who is a founder and Trustee. Mike O'Hara has been involved with Holton Lee since 1994 and has been a Trustee for the past 3 years. He is an artist and registered blind as a visually impaired person. Stella Neil is a disabled woman who has stayed, nine times in total, as a guest at Holton Lee over the past few years. Liz Jones who is the Residential Administrator and wanted to be interviewed not just within that role but wanted to respond as an employee of Holton Lee, more broadly. Derek Coates has been at Holton Lee for the past four years taking responsibility for developing the organic gardens from scratch, working initially as a volunteer and now in two days paid employment. Geraldine O'Meara was part of the founding group for Holton Lee and now works on a contract basis with guests, providing both counselling

and retreat giving. They were all asked the same question, which was, from your experience here can you reflect and comment on how spirituality relates to the arts, environment and disability. I have summarised key points of their narrative and have tried to keep it verbatim. Then I have included reflections from James Wear was our first disabled Artist in Residence. His residency was arranged through Cumbria College of Art and Design where he was just about to complete his BA and he was with us for a month in the summer of 2000. Finally three guest voices are represented in extracts from short articles they published in the MS Magazine, Yes Magazine and The Times newspaper.

### **A chain of Evidence from the Voices Above**

A chain of evidence, which seems to have emerged in what people have said, is that Holton Lee is a sacred and “safe place” where people experience something which is hard to put into words. They feel enabled and respected and as a result can feel like human beings. The concept of spirituality remains difficult to understand and articulate, particularly because of our Christian roots and background, but never-the-less we remain firm in the belief that we don’t want to impose principles or beliefs. In fact, there seems to be an “unwritten rule” operating which enables the fruit in peoples’ lives which we have just read about. This is facilitated through experience in the environment, both inside and outside, the chance to express creativity even if disabled. The place has been made available through the history and beliefs of the Lees family and we continue to be faced with the need to also believe that we will get the necessary funding to continue. James’ life and work changed as a result of his time with Holton Lee and now we enjoy the fruit of his creation in Faith House. Others emphasised the chance for freedom, healing, life changing growth, with the ability to discover more of their true selves. They experienced the intangible, which you can’t see in the special healing atmosphere and they felt something deep and friendly, accompanied with genuine caring and love, something big but yet practical on a day-to-day basis. All of this is spirituality.

A more complete version of their interviews is included in the Appendix number 4

## **Chapter Four:**

### **WHY THE INVESTIGATION AT HOLTON LEE IS PERTINENT**

The most effective way to indicate the major reasons why our investigation at Holton Lee is pertinent to the field of spirituality is to give a brief overview of the key ingredients in the research, outlining what took place and what emerged as we tried to “live out”, “*spirituality in practice*”. Our starting point for the investigation, of necessity, was to design, understand and “*evolve a relevant research and development process*”. This chapter will consider those two headings. Our investigation did not involve abstract forms of spiritual practice and musing on theory but instead required us to live it and embed it within our organisational context, a process through which our structures changed, as described in Chapters Five and Six.

#### **Spirituality in Practice**

Over the three-year research process we found that we had to address and understand spirituality in terms of recognising the need to research spirituality, having a group to do so, what language we used, praxis, spirituality and theory, the need for change/transformation, relationships and understanding within the organisational context. These were the critical ingredients, coat pegs, frameworks or themes of the *model for understanding and developing spirituality* which began to emerge gradually in our evolving practice, through “research data” from the co-researchers and literature review. The phases developed chronologically and iteratively around the cycle and overlap with each other, having emerged from both practice and theory.

I will very briefly list and explain the emergence of each phase below, show the model and then give more understanding of what was involved in each phase while including relevant comments from the co-researchers.

- 1.) As earlier reported, the project began with a few people within the organisation “*recognising the need*” to have an authentic spirituality practice because of the founding vision, which then required the organisation to find an adequate and relevant way to understand how to establish or embed spirituality.



- 2.) Subsequently a “spirituality group” was formed to consider this need; this group ultimately became the “*research group*”.
- 3.) One of its first and most obvious difficulties was that of “miscommunication” because of differing understanding and meaning of “*words*” being used.
- 4.) The group was discussing spirituality “practice”
- 5.) and soon recognised the attendant need to have a relevant and sound accompanying “*theory for spirituality*” since the field is so complex and complicated. However in trying to find a sound theoretical basis it became more obvious that there was a contemporary split and confusion between “*theology*” and “*spirituality*” which also had to be addressed rather than ignored.
- 6.) As we journeyed on through the research process we recognised that we each as individuals, group and organisation, had to stay committed to the process of inquiry which we had begun which inevitably led to deep learning, change and “*transformation*” at each of those levels.
- 7.) Then we realised that a deeper understanding of what is meant by “*mutual relationships*” was implied as we attempted to live them out and sustain them.
- 8.) Obviously the organisation itself, as “*context*” for sound spirituality practice also needed to be considered, since we had a deepening realisation that “spirituality” is “lived” and appropriated, not just a theory. This phase then led us to understand the new, growing and developing field of “spirituality at work”.  
The Social outer life is connected to the inner life.

This emerging awareness ultimately shaped itself into a model of eight phases as indicated above, which are areas of understanding we were pursuing in the research process. The model continued to change and be refined over the last part of the research process and is explained in more depth in Chapter Six.

The cycle and phases are depicted below

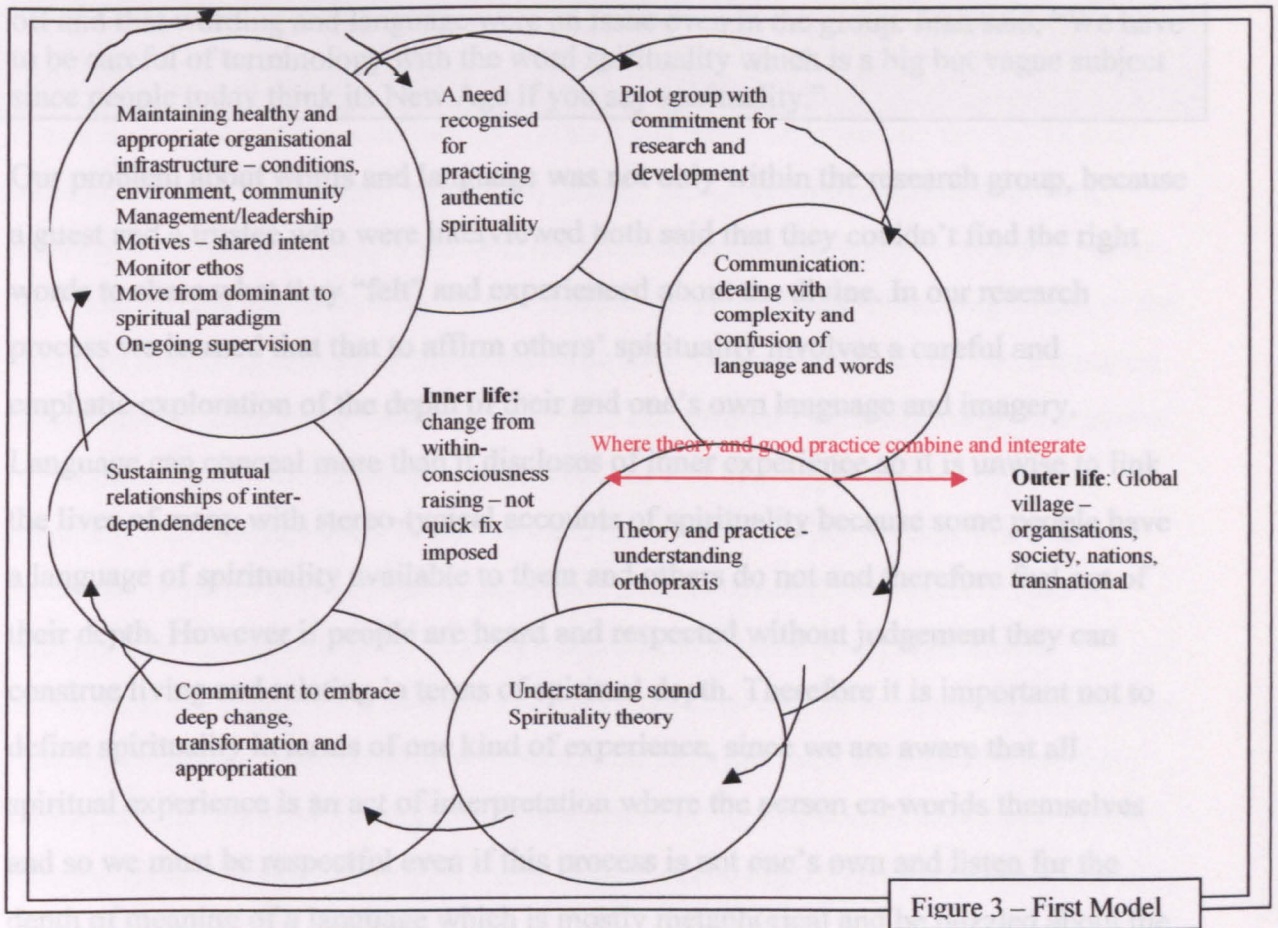


Figure 3 – First Model

## Language

We found the use of words or language about spirituality confusing. Often we thought we understood what was being said but much later found that we each had a different understanding. We then wondered if it was because we each had different theological or spiritual backgrounds. Our discussions then required more time and commitment, however our resultant understanding was richer because we were committed to share and try to understand each other. An essential outcome was that there was less danger of simply settling for “normative” thinking and behaviour.

*Jean*, one of the co-researchers stated that a lot of talking together was necessary in order for us to come to a common understanding in order to try to define spirituality, because we had come from different backgrounds and traditions. She also pointed out that some words didn’t have the same meaning for us and sometimes we didn’t discover that till some time later. *Jean* also said that, as we talk “with” people, the key is to meet them where they are since our basis at Holton Lee is one of love and encouraging people in their own spirituality. *Alan* wrote that, “both feeling and academic comments are necessary in our account because very often feelings one has are communicated verbally and so you limit what you can communicate, but if you can verbalise and get it in writing, in some way that is communicable, then you are extending your audience, eventually with more potential for more people reading able to say I identify with that”. *Julie* stated that, “in trying to write a statement and communicate what we understood about spirituality we had to put it into simple language that wasn’t likely to put people



off and that wording and language were an issue even in the group. Jean said, “We have to be careful of terminology with the word spirituality which is a big but vague subject since people today think its New Age if you say spirituality.”

Our problem about words and language was not only within the research group, because a guest and a trustee who were interviewed both said that they couldn’t find the right words to share what they “felt” and experienced about the divine. In our research process we learned that that to affirm others’ spirituality involves a careful and emphatic exploration of the depth of their and one’s own language and imagery.

Language can conceal more than it discloses of inner experience so it is unwise to link the lives of many with stereo-typical accounts of spirituality because some people have a language of spirituality available to them and others do not and therefore feel out of their depth. However if people are heard and respected without judgement they can construe living and relating in terms of spiritual depth. Therefore it is important not to define spirituality in terms of one kind of experience, since we are aware that all spiritual experience is an act of interpretation where the person en-worlds themselves and so we must be respectful even if this process is not one’s own and listen for the depth of meaning of a language which is mostly metaphorical and be puzzled about the nature of truth, while acknowledging the depth-meaning of everyday experience.

(Worsley, 2000: 618-621)

In fact we also became more deeply aware that the very name of God, used to describe the un-nameable Ultimate Reality, has passed the shelf life for many people since it conjures up images of a super-human person. Church language still implies a God “up there”. According to priest Adrian Smith the crisis of faith today therefore is not a doctrinal one but one of language. Faith is not an intellectual assent to a list of doctrines but a whole framework of beliefs which give meaning to us and so needs to be presented in a language which is meaningful in the context of peoples’ present day knowledge of spirituality, anthropology, physics, and cosmology. We need a language which can express the expanded paradigm of today’s knowledge which quantum physics and the cosmological picture science is now giving us. Since science and religion are both pursuing the Truth along adjacent paths there can be no contradiction. (Smith, 2002:115-119). Bishop Richard Holloway states that language and the role of speech, organisational and ethical systems are all part of consideration of spirituality.

(Holloway, 1992)



## ***Spirituality and Praxis***

Praxis in research terms is defined as “reflexive practice informed by theory” (Zuber-Skerritt, 1994:11) However, “spirituality praxis” involves consideration of power, emancipatory and liberatory transformation and addresses the cultural concerns of our day. Orthopraxis has to do with the constitution of freedom and Liberating Praxis or the praxis of liberating activity is concerned with how to “live the good life” with concern for normative freedom of “what ought to be”. The present *Praxis Paradigm* recognises the importance of relationships, social structures and language therefore replacing idealism. The understanding is that we each have responsibility for how our own particular situation is structured, experienced and constructed for freedom. That is, whether it is transformed away from systems and structures of oppression and destruction. (Chopp, 1993:756-764) Because there is an emphasis on context within the field of spirituality, conversation with social sciences has been necessitated and this socio-political approach is particularly noticeable in liberationist, feminist and justice-focused approaches to spirituality. There is also increasing dialogue between spirituality and science. (Sheldrake, 1998:33-64)

Some guests who visit are suddenly distressed when they hear or read about our “Christian” roots and are then afraid that they will be “got at” or imposed upon. Yet as an organisation we never initiate conversation on the subject of spirituality attempting to proselytise but rather have a more broad understanding of “living it”.

The co-researchers believed that in our enthusiasm it is very important not to impose any type of thinking or understanding on others while also recognising that people seeking the “spiritual” feel comfortable in an environment where people know what they believe. Developing spirituality is often imperceptible and subtle and has to do with values and attitudes. It was often frustrating to find that we had to consolidate before we could “do” therefore feeling and recognising therefore the obvious conflict between being and doing. Praxis is both, with an organic growth process and embodying wisdom comes from the heart to the head, a “bottom-up”, not “top-down” approach.

## ***Spirituality theory***

Our significant and pressing need was for sound theory for the organisation now and for the future, that is, to understand spirituality in depth and yet in relation to the other three Aspects. Because of its length and intensity the investigation was able to extrapolate

and produce relevant theory, which was also informed by other academics and writers working within the field of spirituality. We also became more and more aware of the need for “appropriation” which is transformative, that is, not just theory but practice which is praxis. It became more clear that seeking spiritual formation and following a spiritual discipline is necessary, but not sufficient for the spirituality of the future. Spirituality must permeate the personal and political, it must animate our thought, action and imagination so that we can work for the transformation of the whole world and all life within it. (King, 1992:18-20) In fact groups who are committed to voluntary effort, critical openness and taking their own initiative are bearers of hope. Politically speaking, non-governmental organisations, from a spiritual perspective can be carriers of resistance because they embody a different interest than consumerism. God is a movement, something flowering, growing, and driving, as a process. “When we engage ourselves in the process we become part of the God-movement and are connected with all others.” (Soelle: 2001: 191-194) Holton Lee embodies and attempts to live out its mission which is: “... empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality.”

The co-researchers stated that our theory emerged too in an interactive and inter-relational exchange in the group where the personal learning was affected by the group and vice-versa, where we attempted to have open versus fixed ideas which allowed growth, change and learning which fundamentally required us each to be free as individuals. Both head and heart learning accompanied by deep personal experiences changed our theories and beliefs. Such an integrated search was not just our need to establish “theory” or ideas, which is why the research process took so long. Living in such a process means we never “arrive” and there are no targets therefore we also recognised that we shouldn’t carve our resultant insights or theory in “tablets of stone” either for Holton Lee or for others. It is important to allow and encourage awareness-raising all through the research journey, which is about “being”. It was important to experience solidarity and learning together about spirituality while also learning and recognising that what we were exploring was similar to what others are also looking at in both this country and globally.

### ***Relationships***

We have experienced the fact that mutual relationships are crucial within the research process, within authentic spirituality praxis, and within the contexts for praxis.

“Everything that exists coexists and is bound up into a network of relationships that we call interdependence.” (Soelle, 2001: 283-298). Dualities are transcended and we can live in a state of transformed humanity as part of the whole cosmic order living in inter-



personal relationship in our universe with what modern physics describes as “a complicated web of interdependent relationships” (Griffiths, 1989:78-95)

*Alan wrote that:*

- Within the Spirituality Group we began to live out something of what spirituality is at Holton Lee as we spent time and learned also to listen with respect for each others opinions with a real desire to understand one another, without being competitive or without anyone trying to dominate the group. The group became a “safe place” The group and personal experiences became interrelated and personal growth was facilitated. I learned to see God in all things and loosen up my approach to spirituality by seeing God in new ways, in everyone and everything realising that the simple was often the most profound and of immense value and hopefully changes within me were fed into the Group as we continued our discussions.
- The process of writing the spirituality statement, to capture in writing what in many ways is abstract, proved a worthwhile discipline even though it was hard. We learned that spirituality at Holton Lee is something best understood by being “lived out” particularly in relationships between members of staff, trustees and volunteers and between staff and guests. It is something more likely to be caught than learned and communication on the subject in writing within the organisation needs to be in the simplest terms possible to encourage interest and acceptance by the readers. Increasing awareness of Spirituality and earthing it is not a once only event but an ongoing process which needs to be reviewed and revisited throughout the future.
- The outcome of the consultation day with an outside facilitator was a reorganisation of the management and structure of Holton Lee which intends to encourage shared responsibility and power and a sense of serving the organisation and each other.
- There has been an increasing awareness of the multi-faceted whole of Holton Lee and recognition that Spirituality undergirds the whole and also that Spirituality cannot be separated from its Mission and Vision statements and needs to be taken into account when working out the practical application of these statements.

*At a group meeting of the Trustees at the Awareness-raising day, which is described fully in Chapter Five, they discussed how spirituality at Holton Lee impacted on them as a group and what action may ensue. They identified the following:*

- ❖ The importance of a “flat” non-hierarchical organisational structure, with no “them and us”
- ❖ The need to ensure an environment and ambience through which the Mission and Vision of Holton Lee may be enhanced without being an imposition on those involved.
- ❖ That interrelationship should not be simply functional and that ways needed to be found to strengthen relationships between all involved in the work of Holton Lee.
- ❖ A blend of “visionaries” and “doers” is important at Holton Lee.
- ❖ At the close of the day, there was a strong sense that Holton Lee was emerging as a community of people
- *Loving relationships are an essential expression of spirituality at Holton Lee, evidenced in the importance of:*
  - ❖ Respecting each other
  - ❖ Being willing to listen to each other with the desire to understand
  - ❖ Recognising each others intrinsic worth
  - ❖ Accepting our differences

- As these relationships are worked at and maintained, so residential guests and visitors benefit from the atmosphere created.
- It is clear that although Holton Lee may be described as a secular organisation and not a religious one, the recognition and nurturing of spirituality is essential and needs to be taken into account when engaging staff, accepting volunteers and appointing trustees.
- It has been recognised within the organisation that responsibility for the ongoing nurture of spirituality at Holton Lee should reside with a recognised "Personal growth and Spirituality" Group.
- The Spirituality Statement, implicit in the Mission and Vision statements, along with the spirituality policy document is now a reference point for all involved with Holton Lee and it will need to be revisited at regular intervals.
- There is an increased look for and expectation of seeing God in all things, a belief in the equal value of each individual, whether working or visiting there, recognising their contribution to its life. It is working for the best for both workers and guests.
- Spirituality is seen primarily in the way that people relate to each other, working as a number of small teams within one big team, without an imposed management. Without the ethos of "love and care" spirituality at Holton Lee would be an empty phrase.
- Most at Holton Lee acknowledge the spiritual element and accept and respect differences. The Christian roots from which Holton Lee sprung still have a considerable influence upon the way in which it works. One of the benefits of meeting as a spirituality group has been the growing conviction that in our endeavour to be inclusive and not exclusive we recognised that we should not be ashamed of our Christian roots.
- We need persistent effort to ensure that the four aspects do not become separate entities but are part of a clearly identifiable whole, whilst retaining their own particular emphasis.
- The application of the spiritual principles of loving relationships, such as, respect, listening and a desire to understand each other, also helps in times of conflict resolution but it may also be worth considering a training session on resolving conflict.
- Due to shortage of income, there is a shortage of staff and the resultant pressure of the volume of work also has repercussions in that there is little time for relating.
- "The true impact of the Group's work may never be fully known and/or measurable. Although endeavouring to record in print what is spirituality at Holton Lee and how to embed it in the life and activities of the organisation, it still remains a subject which has much in it which is abstract and an element of 'mystery'. To try to tie it down rigidly in 'tablets of stone' would be to lose its very essence, as it is alive and must be free to develop as the Spirit of God wishes it".
- "The organisational changes reflect the desire to acknowledge and maximise the contributions of all involved, with the importance of creating the space to listen to each other, accepting our differences, whilst still being efficient in any decision making process. It could be asked whether any structural changes have been simply the result of the application of purely current good management practice or have they come about as the result of personal growth and spirituality affecting the decisions? Personally I do not think that this can be answered definitively, as it is impossible to separate the secular and the spiritual at Holton Lee and this was recognised by the Group during its discussions. Therefore, decisions which are made about the structure of the organisation will be a composite of all that is in the



life and work of the individuals involved in the decision making process, but as a result of the work of the Group spirituality should now be having a greater influence.” Other businesses and organisations can use Faith House and in so doing be exposed to the spirituality at Holton Lee, both in its people and in its land.

- “The identification and understanding of spirituality which already exists within the organisation has not been easy for the Group. We have not wished to impose upon others what could have been limited by the interpretation made by six individuals and a statement on spirituality which would have been a compromise made by us in order to come to a conclusion.” However, it has been a process which evolved as we continued to meet and exchange observations and experiences and must be an on-going process.
- Spirituality at Holton Lee is alive and clearly evident in many ways and its development may need to be a gentle and continuous nurturing of where it is already embedded, rather than any dramatic change in approach. Like the inherent strength in a plant there is the power to break through and thrive when encouraged by the right treatment. It is necessary in the near future for Holton Lee to employ a person who would have the overall responsibility of spirituality at Holton Lee.
- Spirituality is primarily with the people of Holton Lee, enhanced by the beauty and accessibility of the land and its flora and fauna.

*The other co-researchers* made additional highlights saying that “conflict resolution” required us to look deeply at what was going on and not avoiding it. It was therefore important to find solidarity and learn together about spirituality, open to learn, listen and share with each other deeply which therefore highlighted how important was our interdependence and interrelationships, which thus provided an enriching variety of interaction. There was also a need to get cohesive enough so that we didn’t spin off in many different directions, which would happen if we didn’t have a unity. This was important since our “development” was for the organisation not just for our individual perspectives. With other stakeholders in mind we were thus also trying to put in place some “development” with attendant “writing” for others within the organisation now and for the future and for the wider audiences. There was potential within the group for conflict with regard to understanding spirituality because of varied backgrounds so it was important to respect, value and listen to each other in relationships of love and care so we were able to discuss theory/theology freely and yet be able to gel for the sake of the organisation.

### ***Change and transformation***

Holton Lee’s understanding for the need for deep change and transformation did not originate within the past three years of our research process but as part of the founding vision and ethos as indicated by Faith in 1982 and that need has not changed but rather has been re-discovered, re-emphasised and re-owned. Faith Lees book titled “Break Open My World” in 1982 is about “self-exploration, love-deepening and God-discovery” and she believed that both holiness and social action are pre-requisites of each other. For example, she pointed out that Martin Luther King was a fore-runner or prototype of the quality that our life in God must have today, which, she maintained,

was to work for the release and freedom of all those who are oppressed and afflicted. She agreed with the Brant Report, the North-South programme for survival. It called for a domestic policy which went beyond parochial or national items in order to address the globalisation of all dangers and challenges of war, chaos and self-destruction. It stated that new ideas are needed to inspire, hopes to encourage and first steps to implement them, along with a belief in human dignity, basic human rights, the value of justice, freedom, peace, mutual respect, in love and generosity, in reason rather than force. New structures are needed with a rearrangement of international relations, building a new order with a comprehensive approach to the problems of development. (Lees 1982: preface and pp146-155)

Inner and outer change can't be separated at either personal or social levels. George Trevelyan believed that, political change only scraped the surface and the only change of real value was an inner willed change in consciousness. Only a new rationale for experiencing ourselves through the exploration of the mystical, scientific and artistic experience could contribute to such a change. (Lazarus, 1998:9) Therefore it could be said that since inner and outer change and knowing can't be separated a journey of change and transformation is required at both individual and social levels in an attempt to establish and be able to "live out" an authentic spirituality praxis. Deep spirituality is understood in our awakening resistance to oppression where we can rectify distortions of the current dominant social-political Patriarchal world, transform relationships in society through the revitalising spiritual energy which is breaking the grip of dominating forces and so empower a *transformative praxis* toward a fulfilling future for all. In this way the oppressed can be empowered with a sense of human dignity and self-hood able to live in free and caring relationships in mature spirituality, thus fostering connectedness and solidarity because self-respect has been enhanced. (Johnson, 1998: 163-176)

The co-researchers stated that spirituality is about a way of being so people will feel free to be at Holton Lee therefore we must be willing to be open at deep levels to be able to co-operate with the Spirit's movement and not block it. A genuine authentic journey is transformative, costly and real and affects others and our own quality of life, a journey contextualised in our personal and organisational lives.

## ***Organisation and Spirituality and Work***

Since we had been attempting to build on the founding vision and long-standing roots of Holton Lee on a daily basis, we had already become aware of the importance of both individuals and the organisation being able to “live” out a healthy and authentic spirituality. The organisation is the context and environment for praxis. Such emerging understanding is holistic and requires a shift in understanding for present practice and paradigms. Bibberman & Whitty, Editors of the book *Work and Spirit – a Reader of New Spiritual Paradigms for Organisations*, point out that some of its contributors realise the necessity that social change is a precursor to macro-organisational changes and that it is only through a paradigm shift on a global level in economics, business philosophy and values, that the assumptions which drive business organisations, can be modified or upleveled to the realms of higher consciousness. They note that most of the academic writers in the book seem to hold great faith in a *spiritual evolution*, which can create a new consciousness in human society. As Editors they themselves suggest that more interdisciplinary work needs to be done on the relationship of political economy, global economics and politics and cultural values as they affect and govern *organisational values*. Social justice, cosmology and business ethics need to join the dialogue as well. They state that Conley and Wagner-Marsh describe what they call “Fourth-wave” basic attitudes, principles and a worldview which can maintain a spiritually based culture which are decisive to the spiritually based firm and an organisation’s spiritually based philosophy. (Biberman & Whitty, 2000: xvii-xxi)

Coghlan and Brannick point out that patterns of interaction within organisations mutually influence one another. Change and learning depend on how people participate in terms of the four levels in the organisation: individual; face-to-face; interdepartmental; and the organisation. Each level has a dynamic relationship with the other three, forging a complex pattern of relationships so dysfunction in one can affect interdepartmental effectiveness and co-ordination and ability of the whole organisation. Organisational levels are important in organisational politics, since political behaviour may be in individuals, team and inter-departmental groups. Organisations are made up of people; people are the organisation. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001:97-107)



The co-researchers stated that as an organisational context and environment for spirituality praxis, we even more significantly, learned that Holton Lee is not about compartmentalising life but rather trying to offer a context in which people can experience the fullness of who they are in body and soul. The Four Aspects of the Arts, Environment, Disability and Personal Growth/Spirituality, all combine to enlarge and enhance the dimensions of life. We recognised as a group that ultimately after this research period was over an external consultant or spiritual director might be needed to help to ensure continuing good practice and integration.

### ***Practising spirituality – what it means to embed it***

So far in this chapter we have been exploring what “spirituality in practice” means, which is difficult to do because understanding of “spirituality” is complex and also the word “practice” often implies intellectual understanding of a set of disciplines, programmes or guidelines which can be implemented. It is important to understand the meaning of a “lived spirituality”, which combines “being” and “doing”. How we are affects what we do and so we often need a deep personal experience of reality, truth and love in order for us to be able to “live it” and not just “talk about it” and live at a superficial level with surface change at personal, social and organisational levels. Living spirituality means living in mutual inter-dependent relationships and therefore requires a psychological and social revolution because inauthentic distortions in relationships have an unequal distribution of power and that is something which is not overcome with a reversal of power and further polarisation but rather through a psychological revolution which is required for a humanely empowering vision (King, 1995) Then we can relate “with” others in true partnership in “integrative power.” (Chittester, 1990) To be able to truly live out such relationships a total dismantling of the Domination Paradigm of social relations is required but also a significant number of human beings need to make a significant evolutionary shift to the next level of consciousness to avert planetary holocaust (Edwards, 1995: 186,179) Such a new and integrating spirituality “is” capable of creating new bodies and generating new social structures. (Fitzgerald, 1996: 410-429), but “It is no good telling people that they must love each other and be compassionate to one another; consciousness must change to dismantle the *Domination Paradigm* which involves a qualitative leap forward in consciousness.” (Edwards, 1995:179, 186) What is required is a transformation of unjust relationships through a personal conversion which is combined with a progressive and revolutionary reform of social structures in order to redress imbalance, since “redemption means overcoming all forms of patriarchy”. We can then locate divine power in life-giving and loving religious living in mutual relationality between



all beings. A consciousness raising begins a process of conversion and helps to reconstruct personal and social relations. (Ruether, 1998: 274-275)

Loving is essentially a religious phenomenon at the centre and core of all authentic religion and cannot come from human effort alone or by programming. (Johnston, 2000:17,830) We often respond to principles, ideologies, belief-systems, economic, political, religious, psychological belief systems, preconceived ideas, biases, programmed perceptions and projections without even being aware of it; our thinking is contaminated by fear, desire and self-interest. Love means being sensitive to life, things, persons, excluding nothing and no one, and happens when we drop prejudices, projections, conditioning, attachments, labels, selective ways of seeing people and the control society exercises over us, with love penetrating the very roots of our being. (DeMello, 1993:52-97)

### **Evolving a Relevant Research and Development Process**

The spirituality group began to meet in 1999 but became the “research group” in 2000, thus becoming further involved in the “research and development” process within the Doctoral programme. As ethnographic researcher/worker I identified deeply with what Torbert suggests in his, “paradigm of paradigms”, (Torbert, 2000:20) which is that we transform our own research into a bridge between knowledge and practice so we can help to inform the organisation we are researching. This happens in real-time communities of inquiry which can bridge differences to support organisational transformation, with a commitment to integrate action and inquiry. He also believes that empowering leadership is needed for this to happen and requires the generation of increasing mutuality and a condition so all can have a full voice, trust, critique and transformation. He calls this a “betting-one’s-whole-life exploration” with others, realising that the research itself and our whole lives as wholes are actions; therefore we act as we seek truths we deeply care about, those that will inform our present awareness. The intention is to empower all with the result that hierarchical aspects of relationship are changed to more peer like qualities, increasing the “I-thou” partnership in conducting valid research together able to challenge incongruities within the organisations mission. This peer-likeness both supports and results from personal, group, organisational and epistemological transformations. He believes that human beings are active seekers of knowledge in the midst of action and not passive consumers

of pre-digested knowledge. Therefore all involved in the research, with 1-2-3 person voices will therefore interweave their knowledge and language through cultivating inquiring, an inquiring awareness in the midst of action. However, this type of truth search, which happens between paradigms, has a dramatic and passionate quality to it, for “one’s sense of one’s life project as a whole is at stake in paradigm differences” and it is risky and scary. Persons play an active role in constructing the worlds they experience, so no journal article is going to play a major role in teaching us how to work and love and inquire in new ways but perhaps a multi-voiced book that interweaves third person science, first person autobiography and 2<sup>nd</sup> person fiction may? He believes that any such initiative requires high commitment to integrating 1-2-3 person in order to generate light emancipatory conversation rather than heat, anger and panic at unexpected views with the potential to create a real time community of inquiry such that academic science typically cannot do. (Torbert, 2000) This understanding is particularly crucial in the field of spirituality because there is considerable fear attendant to the word “spirituality” itself, by many people, who say they instantly link it with “religion” and so identify it with deep and painful memories of past experiences within church or schools where they felt imposed on. Their fear is that Holton Lee will be similar as it attempts to embed spirituality praxis. That is then where awareness-raising and dissemination has been crucial, so we all have an opportunity to explore and understand together what “spirituality” means at Holton Lee.

Biberman and Whitty as Editors state that Konz and Ryan emphasise that the *vision and mission* are the starting point for empirical research into the impact of values on organisational cultures. They point out that it is not easy to maintain organisational spirituality over time and that there is great difficulty in maintaining a convincing spirituality in everyday work life because, “High-minded theory (and theology) is one thing, but everyday consciousness and consideration is quite another.” Porth et al believe that the “learning organisation” can evolve towards themes, which are “potentially” spiritual since there is a convergence between basic ethics and contemporary management theory. Therefore they can arrive at an understanding that organisational virtues make better business sense than allowing negative qualities to grow, that is, “good ethics is good business.” Organisational theory is now starting to expand its notions of the possible human and thereby the possibility of transforming organisational consciousness. (Biberman & Whitty, 2000: xvii-xxi) Our starting point in

the research, as an organisation, was with the founding vision as we continually attempted to keep it integrated and connected with the present Mission Statement.

Our investigation is pertinent because our varied research data were obtained from in-depth living in experience through action research spirals, over an extended period of time, therefore in chronological order/cycles as developed in depth in Chapter Five along with a full understanding of the research approach and accompanying methodological theory. In our process we moved from *The Then* of our founding history to *The Now* of our Participative Action Research in order to inform *The Tomorrow* which also contains transferable grounded living theory which emerged through our process.

### ***Embodying learning, transformative appropriation and knowledge production***

It is essential to recognise and understand the importance of deep learning and knowing within our research process. As stated in Chapter Two we were influenced by what we studied because spirituality is self-implicating therefore our genuine understanding was transformative as we embodied it. The implication is one of “deep learning” as individuals, within the group and organisationally. We moved in our understanding from the personal and individual “I” to the “we” of the group, then on to the “us” of the organisation and to the “them” of wider audiences. It is therefore important to have more theoretical understanding about what learning and knowing means, both for us and others.

Our research process did involve deep learning and knowing which did result in changed practice. Action researchers agree that “objective knowledge” is impossible since they are part of the world they study therefore knowledge making is a political process in the service of particular purposes, which is what we have been involved in. People enter legitimate research to discover and create knowledge and so can say what was learned, thus producing knowledge and action. They are empowered to construct, use and articulate the knowledge gained. Knowers participate in the known articulating their world through experienced and “in-depth” knowing, which is then almost impossible to put into words. However “*presentational*” knowing can give expression through story or drawing, by drawing on aesthetic imagery. “*Practical*” knowing then gives expression through action. There is a connection between power and knowledge

“with” others therefore the goal of our participatory research has been to shift the balance of power by contributing actively to our process of change, which for us was particularly imperative because of our inclusive policy for disabled and non-disabled groups, staff, guests, trustees, volunteers and visitors and other groups we network and connect with on a local and national level, within each of our Four Aspects of the Arts, Disability, Environment and Spirituality. (Reason & Bradbury 2001:11)

Participatory Action Research and a participatory worldview and is also political, in research terms, because it implies democratic and peer relationships, as the political form of inquiry. This political form of participation affirms peoples’ rights and ability to have a say in decisions which affect them and which claim to generate knowledge about them. It asserts the importance of liberating muted voices of those held down by class structure, poverty, sexism, racism and we would now add the fear of disabled people and women. Because there is a connection between power and knowledge, a major goal of participatory research is to shift the balance of power in favour of the poor and marginalized so it therefore contributes actively to the process of democratic social change. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:9-11) The major goal of Participative Action Research to shift the balance of power implies a major process of personal, social and organisational change in the process, which needed to be implemented. Those aims are also reflected in the voices of our research participants, thus indicating that both spirituality and participatory research share similar aims, purpose and goals.

Our Project continued to be complex, as we realised the deeper implications of an “inclusive spirituality” since it is also socio-political in its praxis, as one of mutuality, respect and full participation, with shared power and voice. Therefore the reformulation of disability as a social oppression, requiring us to move from the Medical Model to the Social Model as demonstrated by (Oliver Finklestein) and as explained more fully in Chapter Five, is a holistic approach rejecting a paternalistic patronising and medicalised approach to social policy and life. We became more and more aware that both interpersonal levels and social structures need to change. There are huge and all-encompassing social-political implications in our spiritual lives, at personal, organisational and societal levels. The political imperative of research is about the democratic foundations of inquiry. Participation can empower at a deeper level producing knowing and action, is consciousness-raising and educative. Pedagogy of the oppressed must engage those in positions of power so power can be exercised in

transforming ways. (Reason & Bradbury 2001: 12). In our research project we ensured that awareness-raising and dissemination was spread beyond the research group and interwoven within the whole organisation as the director also stated in his interview.

- Tony said that because the organisation is non-hierarchical those who work in it come and say here is a real problem we've got to solve, not "you are the Director, you have got to solve it". In that sense a "spirituality" culture has definitely been permeated throughout the organisation. Based on my experience of working in other organisations and other training that I have had, but the best way to capture people's hearts is to involve them totally in solving their own problems, isn't it? I think the Disability Movement is where I had to learn that, because there is no point in sitting and complaining about social workers not doing their best for you, because there is a strong argument to say we should all be responsible for our own situation. And social workers can't do anything about that so it is part of the empowerment.
- The notion within the disability movement that part of the elitism of non-disabled people, is their ability to do things quicker than disabled people, not necessarily better but quicker. That has had a real disempowering affect on disabled people. If you struggle with a profound impairment it can take a lot longer to do something. Now, the question is, is it done better by somebody who can do it quicker and the answer has got to be no. And that has permeated through the organisation as well because we might take longer to do something but it doesn't really matter as long as we have a sense of achievement when we have done it and people aren't disempowered. It takes an enormous amount of time to help people build up their own confidence so that they have an ownership, can process and think about and work their way through what needs to be done, rather than me telling people what will be done, which wouldn't really help and then the person would not have felt trust in the organisation.

Because of our vision and Mission Statement we insisted on including the understanding and opinion of Disabled people within the research process, that is, those who are considered an oppressed and marginalized minority group, who were thus able to contribute to and help to surface deeper awareness and insight. They were involved in second and third person research with a voice which helped to create the knowledge we now have, helping us as an organisation to know and understand liberatory praxis more deeply, able then to re-politicise our spirituality praxis. Thus our conventional structure was disrupted and challenged and this awareness now continues as we interface with other groups and organisations.

In fact emancipatory traditions suggest that by exploring relational and reflective forms of knowledge we can be provided explanation and understanding through integration of meaning. This *relational knowledge* is the foundation of community life and its development fosters community ties. *Reflective knowledge* arises through the process of

consciousness raising and conscientization and is concerned with a vision of “what ought to be, what is right and wrong” as it considers the normative states in social, economic and political realms and distinguishes between connected and separated knowing. *Separated knowing* adopts a critical eye and *connected knowing* seeks to understand from within, emphasising the relational aspects of knowing and the practice of management. The knower thus participates in the known and so is able to articulate their world in four interdependent ways:

- *experiential* which is face-to-face, through empathy and resonance in-depth which is almost impossible to put into words;
  - *presentational* which grows out of the experiential and provides some form of expression through aesthetic imagery;
  - *prepositional* which draws on concepts and ideas;
  - *practical* which consummates the other forms of knowing in action in the world.
- (Reason/Bradbury 2001:9-11)

Since spirituality involves the whole of life and a quality of life we have experienced the fact that its practice can be enhanced and developed through significant and sustained participative research, which is undertaken over a period of time. For us further resultant outcomes include living grounded theory and practical changes, as well as those of deepened relationships and changed infrastructure.

### ***Social Aspect of the Model***

As depicted in the Model, it is not either/or but both/and, that is, an integration of our *inner and outer work and knowing*, which has been referred to previously both by Faith Lees who believed that “holiness and social action are prerequisites of each other” and Trevelyan saying that inner and outer change was not able to be separated either at personal or social levels. It is from a change in our perceptions that external change happens. Understanding means knowing but a knowing that is not based solely on observation, inner reasoning, logical deduction or the assurance of other people, but with an inner sensing more like an intuition, which we cannot create or manufacture or force ourselves into. (Hughes, 1993:152) Understanding the importance of connecting inner and outer work and knowing is also a characteristic of a participative worldview in that the individual person is restored to the “circle of community” and the human community itself to the context of the wider natural world.



The depth required for in-depth learning and appropriation is important to understand and it was useful to relate it to the *Learning Cycle*. It was essential for us not to miss out the middle two stages of the learning cycle's four stages of: *experience, reflective observation, conceptualisation and doing*. In the cycle we began with concrete experience, moved to reflective observation, then to conceptualisation and making sense which led to doing and active experimentation and problem solving tested out in our "real world" which then provided the context for the next cycle. Parffrey points out that each stage of this cycle is necessary and when completed one is back at the beginning but in a different place. The locus of the next cycle is different in that it has moved on and the cycle becomes a spiral, so change becomes a cycle/spiral born of understanding one's practice, itself born from the reflective process, since practices are changed by changing the ways they are understood. It is also crucial to be very aware of the real danger that with the pressures of the expectations of a range of stakeholders there is always the danger of doing the "mini-loop" around stage one and four, that is doing and having experiences, forming and reformulating plans, with very little time for the essential middle two processes of reflection and making sense. But it is only when the four are undertaken as discrete activities and in chronological order that true movement around the cycle can take place and then "we arrive where we started and know it for the first time"; that is when we learn. Without this process, we will start where we started but continue on in the same way, not the gentle ongoing spiral of development but rather a vicious circle, going round and round the same route, never learning and never moving on. The essential requirements of the reflective stage are: time alone to think and take stock; opportunity to discuss and reflect with others about one's experiences; engagement with others and different viewpoints, both in discussion face to face and in literature. (Parffrey, website) As our interview data state we were always in real danger of skipping out the middle two stages because of time and financial pressure which had the consequence of threatening to reduce our spirituality meetings to be solely thought of and conducted as "business meetings" with business agenda where we would focus solely on action and outcomes.

Without this deeper reflection in the *Learning Cycle* we would not have had the *triple loop learning* and change which resulted in system and infrastructure organisational change, which was also referred to in Chapter Two. Also such Participative and Co-operative Action Research has helped to ensure the validity of our research and practice

as a safeguard from collusion or mistaken identity with other theologies or theories, both normative and unsound. (Armsby, 2000:35-42) The whole research process did feel like an experience of “betting-one’s-whole-life exploration” because this type of truth search, which happens between paradigms, has a dramatic and passionate quality to it, for “one’s sense of one’s life project as a whole is at stake in paradigm differences” and it was/is risky and scary.

As stated, since we are a small organisation we had the opportunity to burrow more deeply and stay with the process of discovery, unearthing understanding and learning, and were thus more able to apply it, live it out and extrapolate theory which has been marked, shaped and under-girded by a deep and lived-out spirituality at both personal and corporate dimensions. During our three-year “research journey” we have been able to make some of our implicit and tacit knowing more explicit as our statement on spirituality at Holton Lee states:

*“At Holton Lee, we believe spirituality to be both personal and social, challenging us to reclaim connections within ourselves, others, the sacred and our world. It is inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience, thus integrating body, mind and spirit and facilitating personal growth. Such growth comes from discovering our inner potential and growing into the fullness of who we are created to be, recognising our interdependence with one another and the world we belong to.”*

The founding vision of Holton Lee places emphasis on the integration of its Four Aspects of the Arts, Disability/Care, the Environment and Spirituality/Personal Growth. Our literature states that:

*“Our vision developed out of the belief that within each person is the potential for growth and creativity, which when recognised, enables that person to mature and flourish. We now work to provide a peaceful and relaxing atmosphere for our guests within a supportive environment and pleasant surroundings. There are opportunities for people to grow in understanding of themselves, of others and the environment. It operates as a place of refuge, safe yet potentially stimulating, where people may discover ways of integrating the creative, spiritual and physical aspects of themselves.”*

We have not only been “thinking” about and writing about this integration but have been attempting to “live it” out on a daily basis. We still don’t want to “define” spirituality. Our statement is for our own clarification and it is undergirded and elaborated by the policy which we subsequently wrote for the organisation which we have now referred to as we continued to work in-situ in our enculturated practice, wedding theory and practice as we continued to reflect-in-action.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **HOW THE INVESTIGATION PROCEEDED AND WHAT IT ENTAILED**

#### **Introduction**

Chapter Five outlines how we went about our research project and what the consequences were. The sections indicated below are in the order in which they emerged during the three-year process.

1. Research motive
2. Formation of the research group
3. Group process described
4. Action research understanding
5. Emerging action cycles and data
6. Data described in depth
7. An overview of outcomes of the research in the organisation
8. Summary points about our research process

At various points I will use diagrams as necessary to help to explain some of our process and make reference to the “model” which emerged through this research process, referred to in Chapter Four and developed in more depth in Chapter Six.

#### **1. The Research Motive**

In 1999 during my study on spirituality for my MA, I realised that my commitment to start a spirituality group had to do with my belief in the necessity of inter-relationship, inter-dependence and shared responsibility, not by having “top-down” prescriptions with me working as an individual within a department to develop “spirituality” deciding what was best. It seemed instead that a more holistic and integrated approach would be more suitable and the need was to find a way to be in a “process” with others so we could find a “shared intent” about the Personal Growth/Spirituality Aspect, “with” decision makers within the whole organisation, so that we were all singing the same tune. A fundamental characteristic of understanding spirituality praxis is that it happens with mutuality in inter-relationship, with shared power; it includes both theory and

experience/practice, that is, cognitive and affective knowing. In order to proceed with my mandate to develop the Spirituality Aspect I formed the Spirituality Group, which met monthly. I eventually outlined our needs in a “*Spirituality Scale 1-10*” which I wrote in 1999 asking the Trustees which part of the scale they wanted the Spirituality development to be. It is included on the following page, diagram 1.

Leave as is or stop it

- Tick over as we are – “just happening”
- Do very little else for further development
- Not much “shared vision and intent” – with staff, trustees and volunteers, if any
- Not much link between/with other 3 aspects of creativity, disability/care or environmental awareness
- No particular staff or department
- Counselling, retreats, spiritual guidance – offered only if requested by guests and only if a Bank is maintained by someone
- No marketing or advertising on above
- Let it all drift to where it will- it could either end up healthy and authentic or not – ie no infrastructure
- If we look back in 10-20 yrs time where will it have got to considering founding vision ie now happening by chance with no particular steering or vision shared
- Or drop this leg/aspect now as irrelevant because in the challenging climate and mine field of “spirituality” and “personal growth” best left alone than to become cutting edge – not enough resources
- Faith House could best be used for other various groups/courses/seminars/bookings for Art or Environment groups, Social Services, CPI etc and Church groups – as a venue only for their own work

A “bit” more development

- Develop a bit more
- Have PT staff/department
- More “shared vision and intent” with staff, trustees and volunteers
- More defined links and overlaps/resourcing with other aspects of creativity, disability/care or environmental awareness
- Continue offering counselling, retreats, spiritual guidance and continue to actively market and advertise it and
- Develop keeping abreast of the times in this field
- Steer department/ aspect according to the shared vision and intent to be middle of road, basically just servicing those who come as guests- ie quite low key development
- Would be healthy/authentic and kept an eye on in terms of national and global climate/developments in the field
- Develop our own understanding and agreed vision of what we mean by “spirituality” and “personal growth” here at Holton Lee so we are proactive not reactive
- With Faith House development and Artists Studios, develop more “in house” designed courses ie those for which we decide who to book in as tutors or teach them ourselves ie courses/workshops and seminars which reflect our philosophy

Prophetic, cutting edge, relevant – unique

- Develop a lot more including infrastructure
- Have a full time staff member and dept
- A really well developed “shared vision and intent” by staff, trustees, work as a Team
- really well developed, innovative creative, unique links and overlap with other 3 legs/aspects ie spirituality and creativity
- spirituality and disability/care
- spirituality and environmental awareness
- creatively offer and advertise counselling, retreats and spiritual guidance in our unique and integrated way where spirituality and psychology/counselling overlap and reflect contemporary unique development
- actively and very creatively further develop the department according to “shared vision and intent” to be on cutting edge, prophetic, place of excellence, in keeping with the founding vision.
- Develop a strong and active committee to help steer and maintain cutting edge, relevant and informed thinking
- Develop links with other places and networking eg: Sacred Land, Schumacher College, Creation Spirituality, Alternative Centre – St James Picadilly, Retreat Movement, Sarum College etc
- Develop a Quantum application/praxis here
- Develop our philosophy to be healthy, Authentic and always keeping abreast in the very fast developments and mine field of spirituality and personal growth– globally and nationally
- Continue with on-going training
- Appreciate more comprehensively, the reality that our guests are biological, psychological and spiritual beings, therefore ideally need to be provided for as



- such, not compartmentalised and further dichotomised  
 With Faith House development see this as our opportunity to  
 develop cutting edge, relevant courses/seminars on:
- Spirituality and creativity/art, disability, environment, feminism, psychology, ecological global issues,
  - sustainability, health (physical and emotional), religion and spirituality, quantum science – all with the aim that
  - we want to facilitate all people coming into more complete freedom.
- We would therefore be able to have key speakers, facilitators to facilitate people with “learning by enquiry” not didactically
  - We could have links with local schools, colleges, universities and have more viable ...
  - development with interdisciplinary training with psychology & spirituality, environment, ecopsychology & spirituality; quantum physics & environment, business, spirituality, psychology and creativity. And develop dialogue with other Faiths.
  - Understood is that implicit to developing this cutting edge the whole of Holton Lee would have to be integrated and not compartmentalised and we would move from a hierarchical model to an interrelated, integrated facilitating model of management and organisation
  - We could produce occasional papers, packs to educate
  - Would need more and cheaper accommodation for residential courses, days, evenings, and series.
  - Would include “personnel” considerations so “spiritual energy” can be maintained and not run so low.

10.06.2000

They said they wanted scale number ten and so at that point I decided then to join the Doctoral programme in order to progress development significantly and adequately. The Spirituality Group then became the Research Spirituality Group. As stated in the initial chapters, our Participative Action Research took place over a three-year period, as a Case Study. Our need was not just for theory but also for development within our context and existing practice. It was in this way that we began our process and journey and began to learn together, as individuals, a group and organisation. Having been deeply immersed in the organisation and context as a member of its founding organisation, Post Green Community since 1975, and continuing to work at Project Development Manager, I was able to function as a “situated actor”, intervener, actor director, within the organisation as an ethnographic “researcher worker” working as a member of the research group and organisation, not as a separate isolated researcher coming in from an outside consultancy.

## **2. Formation of the Research Group**

Post Green Pastoral Centre was moved to Holton Lee in 1996. I took up overall responsibility to oversee and establish the Spirituality and Personal Growth Aspect, when my co-director left in 1999. Since I was about to complete my MA, we agreed that it could fit within my existing remit as Projects Development Manager. First I began to meet with Julie for several months, who supported the notion of developing spirituality and then with Tony. We chose two Trustees and a Volunteer to Holton Lee who is also a Counsellor and Spiritual Director elsewhere, which made the group six in number. All of these are people we knew would be committed to the process and who had a personal interest both in Holton Lee and in “spirituality”. “We” then together decided if we wanted to add to the group of six or not and decided to keep it small and manageable and to meet for one and one half to two hours monthly, beginning in June 1999. The idea to do a Doctorate in September 2000 required the director and some trustees as signatories as well as significant others working within the field of spirituality, therefore it was a very public and shared commitment. The research group agreed to be part of the Action Research process I was proposing and to function as “co-researchers”. We have continued to function as a team, with equal standing and also with the recognition that I am a worker researcher, with the remit within the organisation as a paid staff member working three days per week, to develop spirituality praxis which I believe means to implement and put in place what “we” agree. I am well

aware that this whole process has taken much longer than if I had just rushed ahead alone, as a “Department head”, making and implementing decisions, thinking that my MA in Spirituality would stand me in good stead, to function in that manner.

Before we go any further in describing our journey it is important to further contextualise the Research Group itself. Alan and Jean Greening who have both known Holton Lee since its inception were also involved with Post Green Community for many years. They founded and directed Marlow Pastoral Foundation for the past twenty years; are trained in counselling and spiritual guidance. Alan is the trustee responsible for the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect and for Human Resources. Tony Heaton is the Director, an artist and is disabled; he has been with Holton Lee for the past five years. Jeanne Hinton is a founder member of Post Green Community, an author of twenty books on spirituality and base communities and a trustee of Holton Lee. Julie Walker works part time as both the Land Manager and Volunteer co-ordinator. She is a biologist, trained counsellor, has a post graduate degree in Theology and is currently continuing training as a Psychotherapist.

As researcher/worker it is important to give significant information about my background. I will include a more in-depth contextualisation outlining my positionality for our research project. Having joined Post Green Community in 1975, within that context, in 1984, I founded and co-directed Post Green Pastoral Centre which offered residential care, retreats, counselling, spiritual direction and courses/workshops. During these years I learned to live and work participatively and co-operatively and so to do research about spirituality otherwise would seem totally incongruent. I had worked very closely with Lady Lees (Faith) for twenty years until her death in 1996, which included close collaboration in establishing Holton Lee and now am the only remaining staff member of the group which founded Holton Lee. I also have had thirty years of experience living within lay Christian Communities in this country and Canada as well as initially training and working as an SRN and then in the fields of counselling and spiritual direction. I spent six years on the Executive for the National Retreat Movement. I have been an active member of my local Roman Catholic Church, as a Eucharistic Minister, serving on the PCC and as part of the Justice and Peace group. I completed my MA in Christian Spirituality in 1999, at Heythrop College, University of London.

### **3. Group Process Described**

Since the aim of this report is for it to be easily understood and accessible for all stakeholders, particularly Holton Lee, it is important now to describe what happens in Action Research in order that the reader can make sense of what was taking place over the three-year period, within the spirals of action research cycles, which were iterative as they unfolded in real time on our non-linear journey. I know that for some at Holton Lee the process seemed nebulous, difficult to grasp, to justify in time and financial terms, and it has been difficult sometimes to see real and tangible outcomes of action and doing and income.

The group began to meet monthly in June 1999. It was agreed that our task was to develop the vision and understanding of Spirituality and Personal Growth in relationship to the Arts, Disability and the Environment, to write out an accompanying statement, to do market research, network, write leaflets describing what we offered, provide staffing for Counselling and Retreat work, with ideas, arrangements, financial and organisational business plans, establish links with others, think of courses and the use of Faith House, which was due to open in June 2000. We were mandated to ensure that the vision was kept alive and to take it forward and keep up the Spirituality and Personal Growth Aspect. This meant laying a base, deciding on strategic development to consolidate and build up that Aspect. The group was to be a body where the central vision was held and reviewed ensuring that it was not marginalized as a side arm. Over a period of time and in-depth discussion, together, we decided on the specific question for the research which was, “How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis?” Spirituality and Personal Growth had been developing at a minimal level within the organisation, and as previously stated it was now essential to put Holton Lee under the microscope to view it through the lens of spirituality so we could search for and discern what was happening within our context and so be able to develop appropriate, informed, living and grounded theory, both for us and wider audiences.

Throughout the process we insisted on linking whatever we did with the founding vision and ethos, which is based on an understanding of the integration of the whole of our lives as Faith Lees had written, therefore the theme of connectivity and non-compartmentalisation ran through our inquiry. Affirmative methodology was therefore

part of our research approach throughout since it concentrates not so much on problems but on what is working and looking forward. Outcomes are then propositions which can be carried forward as we build on what is working. (Heron, 1998:8)

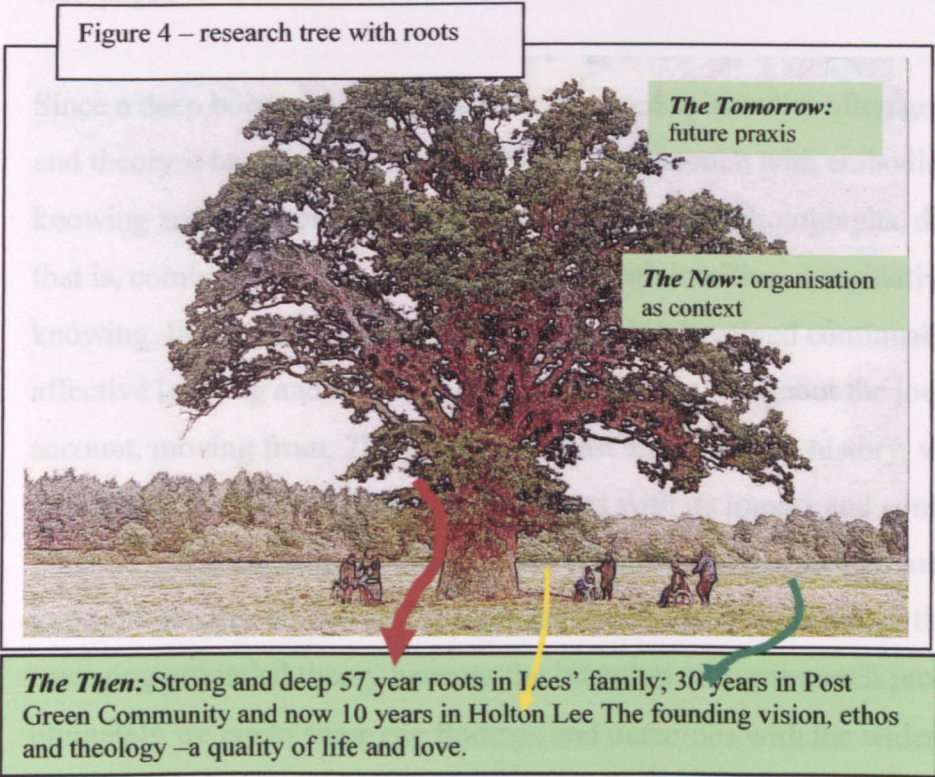
Our three-year qualitative research journey has been very complex for several reasons:

- i. I had to initially design an appropriate research tool
- ii. It involved and changed us as individuals, as a group and as an organisation in an on-going way.
- iii. It is therefore a challenge to adequately reflect this complex “process” in writing and make it accessible to as wide an audience as possible, so the use of language has been of immense difficulty and importance,
- iv. because the subject of “spirituality” itself is controversial and a new field within academia.
- v. It has taken place within a secular context which has Christian roots, in an organisation and Charity which is still growing and obviously always changing and shifting as it is impacted by life around and from within.
- vi. We operate with a policy, which states that we include “all” people so we needed to consider an inclusive spirituality as well as the Christian roots and perspective.
- vii. Spirituality is only one Holton Lee’s four interactive and mutual Aspects, so it needed to be both “researched and developed” in an integrated way with the other Aspect groups, with relevant accompanying theory to underpin the practice.

Therefore the research had to include considerations of various issues such as: what actually does the action research “process” and change mean especially as a tool to research “spirituality”; how to incorporate values of inclusivity and mutuality; our understanding and use of language and interpretation; a broad understanding of spirituality and also how it relates to the arts, environment and disability; a deep understanding of relationships, power, love and structure within the organisation as the actual context and container for spirituality; addressing our dilemma of our exploration as a secular charity with Christian roots; consideration of how to keep a vision and ethos alive and how to include contemporary understanding of science with spirituality concerns. These are the major issues which we addressed and theory subsequently



emerged through our research which informed our practice. Theory and practice as they mutually interact combine together to produce praxis which is informed practice.



The emerging image or metaphor of a tree, as indicated in the diagram, was helpful in trying to represent both the “research process” and the “bottom up growth” of spirituality from the roots of the

founding vision through to the present day, particularly since our attempt and desire was always to be true to the founding principles and theology while adjusting to life in the present contemporary worldview.

The tree produced fruit as major outcomes, as a result of our process, which in brief are: a more informed understanding of authentic spirituality praxis; an informed and changed infrastructure, which is flat and non-hierarchical, with relationships of mutuality and interdependence; living and grounded theory which has emerged including some understanding about how the aims and purpose of Participative Action Research are similar to those of spirituality and how they can integrate and mutually inform and support each other; the importance of understanding language and knowing; what an inclusive and holistic spirituality can mean; what was involved in the transformative research journey and the deep process of change, where we moved from our individualistic “I” through to a “we” in the research group , and “us” in the organisation, so that we can then share with the “them”, the wider audience of readers; what spirituality, means both within the organisation and our world home, as contexts for it; and how we can incorporate an understanding of theology, quantum spirituality

and modern science. Understanding what “process” itself means has been a major aspect of the research, that is, understanding that research outcomes or end results are the by-product of the process, which itself is the task and way to get results (Parffrey, web page)

Since a deep bottom up participative connected spirituality often goes beyond words and theory it has been important for me to be in touch with embodied and imaginative knowing and representation hence the use of words, photographs, diagrams and models, that is, combining rational, linear thinking with intuitive, imaginative affective knowing. In fact, the entire research process has involved continual cognitive and affective learning and knowing as we progressed throughout the journey and narrative account, moving from, *The Then* of the past and founding history, vision and ethos, through to *The Now* of the research process with its impact and contribution to current practice within the organisation and on to *The Tomorrow*, which includes contribution to future practice at Holton Lee and elsewhere, which can happen through outlining the emerging grounded theory because the intention of our research process was that ultimately we could share our findings and outcomes with the wider global audience. I have included some understanding about what “process” means as we moved from “what happened” to how “we made sense” of it so we could consider an answer to the question “so what?” Now the research process can continue in and through the readers of this discourse who can continue to give answers by participating in what Ricoeur calls a “semantic picnic” where we as authors bring the text and you the readers the interpretation. Since we approached our inquiry with appropriate critical skills and discipline our account may provide some perspective on what is universal and on the knowledge creating process, which frames the account. (Reason & Bradbury 2000:8) I am well aware that Qualitative Action Research is extremely difficult to report (Dick 1993:10,34) and it is particularly daunting to try to accurately and adequately represent the process as a whole. (McNiff et al, 1996:20,129-133) In fact, it is more like a story and narrative of something, which happened to a group of people who were on a journey together.

#### **4. Action Research Understanding**

In our growing understanding of Action Research we appreciated more and more that it is itself a method for making sure that our action was informed, not just implementing dictates of other people. Rather it had to be intentional, make and implement plans, monitor the action and evaluate it, all as necessary parts of the process. That is enquiry is a process not a product and within it many important and unintentional events and consequences intervene. As good action researchers we took advantage of these unplanned happenings and integrated them into future cycles of action gaining many insights in retrospect, which were therefore, not the result of planned action. The whole inquiry is a “cycle of cycles” or “spiral of spirals”. The means and end are merged so that methodology and theory intertwine in the service of practical morally committed action called praxis. Our professional practice was improved because we were involved in researching our action as we tried to bring about improvement by working to reduce the gap between our values and the practice. Such Action Research leads to knowledge, providing evidence to support this knowledge, making explicit the process of inquiry through which knowledge emerges and links new knowledge with existing knowledge. Thus it requires action as an integral part of the research process itself; it is focused by the researcher’s professional values rather than methodological considerations and is necessarily insider research as practitioners research their own professional actions. (McNiff et al, 1996:17, 124, 14)

Thus we continued on with our journey and began the formal research process with fuzzy research questions and a fuzzy research design during this “messy period” (Dick 1993:14) and therefore had to learn on the run, in real time in a real situation, doing our “research cycling” which meant moving to and fro between experience and reflection. (Heron, 1996:4, 8) This process eventually evolved into iterative chronological spiral research cycles which were ultimately able to be named and identified over the years, “within” the group as our “development” work evolved. Obviously it is easier to look back now and to list out the cycles which emerged, which I will do below, but in the midst of the process, moving along the research path, responding to impacts and developments as they emerged, was not according to a fixed procedure or plan but happened by being responsive to life evolving around us, through our discussions and subsequent action, planned and proposed and then reviewing what was done, reflecting, discerning with reflexivity, both individually and as a group; so in that way the journey

was progressive. In fact it was very complex, happening at many levels and from many points of view, that is, in research terms, in terms of the field of study, of the organisation and the individuals involved and with the relationship with the University and academic requirements.

Key understanding or frameworks and theoretical needs began to emerge through our increasing awareness, which helped us to contextualise and make better sense of what was happening and what our research needs and motives were, such as, the fact that we were:

- i. Working as *individuals, a group, organisation* and within our wider global social setting
- ii. That is with the *I – we – us – them* consideration and application
- iii. That we were dealing with the past, present and future of the organisation, which we termed: *The Then, The Now and The Tomorrow* with its fifty seven year old history.
- iv. Confusion between the theoretical understanding of “spirituality” and “theology” began to emerge as more of a problem than we had anticipated and therefore we had to address it.
- v. We more deeply and significantly began to realise that the *organisational context* was a critical part of the research consideration as context, container and environment for our spirituality practice. We recognised that hierarchical authoritative structures were inconsistent with structures conducive to spirituality praxis. This then led us to realise that we were also having to address an understanding of the new and growing phenomenon of “Spirituality in the Workplace”.
- vi. As we journeyed we individually and together began to be more cognisant of the crucial need to stay in the “process” and in the midst of the *learning cycle* itself and not abort it because of pressures of time, finance, business and business.
- vii. Our main realisation was that we didn’t want to be prescriptive about “spirituality” but rather were committed to let it emerge from “the bottom up” as it were, not from the “top down” with ideas, theories, ideologies and good ideas to be prescribed and imposed but rather were willing to be attentive and alert to what was emerging in the process. *The process* was the product and way to get the desired outcomes, which for us, was to understand how to establish and embed



sound authentic spirituality praxis within our secular voluntary charity organisational context

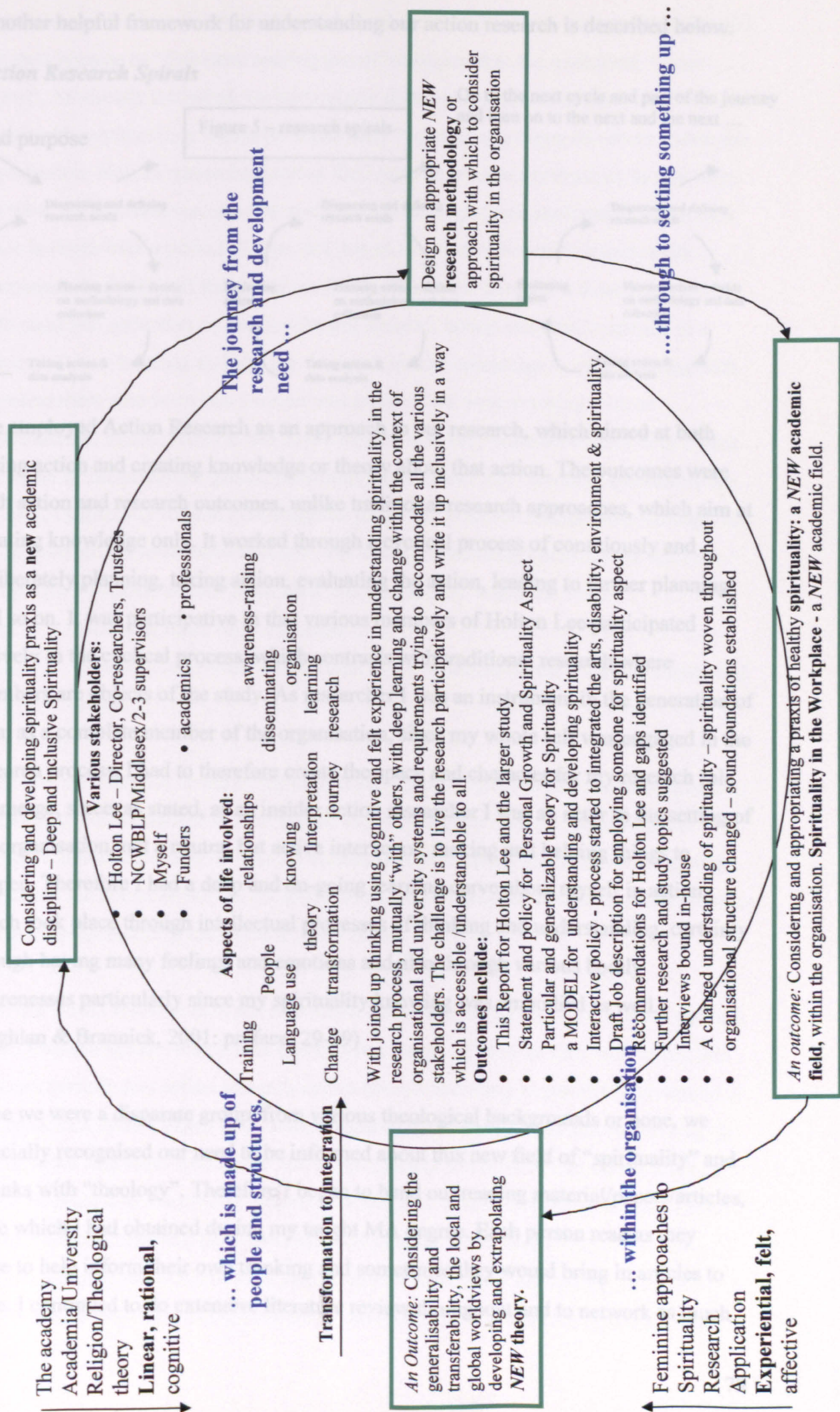
- viii. Subsequently another need emerged which indicated and highlighted the change and shift needed to move from the Dominant, Mechanistic, rationalistic top down model and Paradigm to the Inclusive Spiritual model and Paradigm, which works “with” people and required *transformation* at various levels.
- ix. During the initial search for an appropriate research approach with which to consider spirituality, the idea of a “*research tree*” emerged as a very helpful metaphor especially as we began, in more depth, to appreciate that life continued to grow and emerge from the long-standing roots and history, up through the trunk of the present day life and happenings, which in the end produced fruit on the branches for others to enjoy. The seeds could then eventually drop into ground and grow elsewhere. This image, its progression and use will be explained throughout this chapter. It went through many stages of understanding, use and development over the three-year period.
- x. We also began to become aware of a surprising factor which was that the more we talked about and discussed our understanding of “spirituality” the more we also realised that we didn’t all have the same understanding or interpretation of the *words* and concepts being used and discussed.
- xi. In that context we became even more aware of the need to respect and value each other in *relationship* in order to be able to really listen to and hear each other.
- xii. We recognised that we, somehow, needed to keep others within the organisation abreast of our developing understanding and continually *disseminate our understanding* so that we didn’t get isolated or that people would begin to think that “spirituality” understanding was resident only within the group.
- xiii. “Writing up” included *designing diagrams* in order to give visual representation and hopefully more clarity to what was happening in the research process; they will be used as necessary.
- xiv. Ultimately a final *cyclical model for understanding and developing spirituality* emerged, which was briefly explained in Chapter Four. This cycle outlines descriptors, ingredients, guidelines and principles as an on-going model of facilitation. In Chapter Six there will be more explanation about the theory and experience involved in the model, which enables a widening global view, with inner and outer lives connected. It helps to understand how our process helped us to live and appropriate true spirituality.



- xv. Throughout the process we were continually considering and addressing our need to integrate Holton Lee's *Four Aspects*, that is of Spirituality with the Arts, Disability and the Environment.

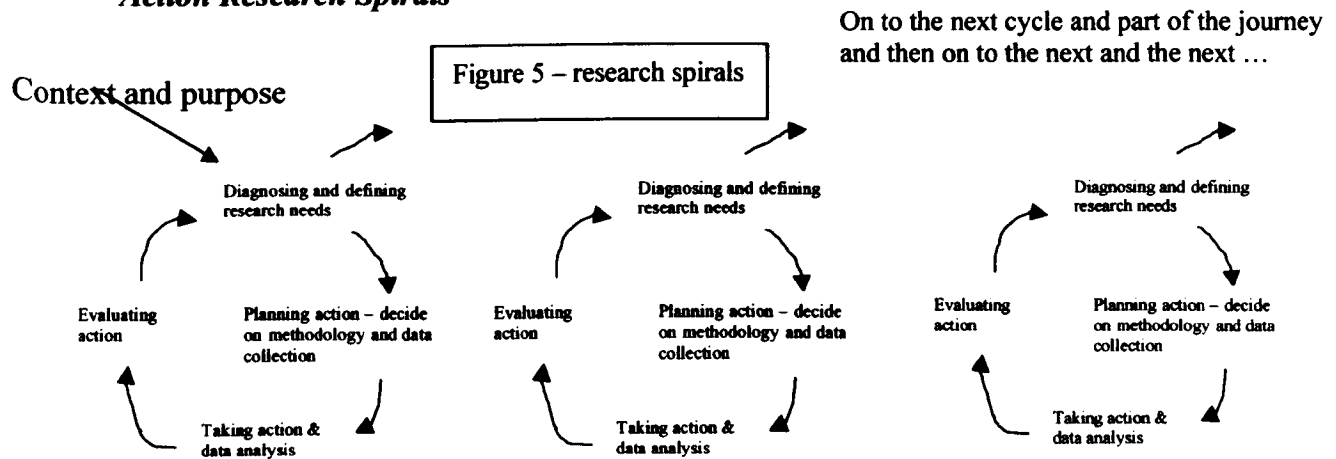
The research task was not straightforward because of these complex considerations. Early on in the process diagram 2 on the next page "*Aspects and Ingredients of the Research Journey*" emerged in my attempt to try to make sense of and depict what was involved. It shows the aspects and ingredients which we needed to consider for the research journey, indicating that we were dealing with a *new academic discipline*, needing to find an *appropriate research approach*, and then deal with resultant insights, understanding and deeper needs which were emerging as we continued to work with the various, unplanned and emerging outcomes. *Understanding of "Spirit and Work"* was obviously particularly important for us since we had already recognised the critical reality of the "organisation" as context, environment and container for spirituality praxis. Our own need too of being able to extrapolate and formulate relevant grounded and *living "theory"* necessary for sound theoretical underpinnings for our own present and future praxis which was consistent with the founding vision was an essential ongoing development. Of course, in addition, one of the requirements of the Doctoral Programme is to have generalisable, transferable outcomes for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person wider audiences, which we were therefore always considering. The diagram lists the various stakeholders along with the aspects of real life and practice involved since this research project was not a PhD being written with ideas and theories only. Some outcomes are also indicated in the drawing. The journey progressed onwards from our "research and development" need through to setting something up, with the "action" of events and workshops. It became obvious early on that simply designing questionnaires to be filled in wouldn't suffice even within the action research process. What was necessary was for the group to continue to work in-depth, being willing to stay committed and involved to pursue an answer to the research question, which asked how to embed spirituality within our organisation.

# ASPECTS AND INGREDIENTS FOR THE RESEARCH JOURNEY an inclusive integrated approach



Another helpful framework for understanding our action research is described below.

### *Action Research Spirals*



We employed Action Research as an approach to our research, which aimed at both taking action and creating knowledge or theory about that action. The outcomes were both action and research outcomes, unlike traditional research approaches, which aim at creating knowledge only. It worked through a cyclical process of consciously and deliberately planning, taking action, evaluating the action, leading to further planning and so on. It was participative in that various members of Holton Lee participated actively in the cyclical process, which contrasts with traditional research where members are objects of the study. As researcher I was an instrument in the generation of data, as a complete member of the organisation, since my whole self was engaged in the research process. I had to therefore create the space and character for my research role to emerge, since, as stated, as an insider action researcher I was an actor in the setting of the organisation, not a neutral but active intervenor, making and helping things to happen. Therefore I had a deep and on-going learning curve about myself in action, which took place through intellectual processes of thinking and understanding, certainly through having many feelings and emotions and also through various bodily awarenesses particularly since my spirituality knowing was embodied as well. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001: preface; 29-39)

Since we were a disparate group, from various theological backgrounds or none, we especially recognised our need to be informed about this new field of “spirituality” and its links with “theology”. Therefore I began to hand out reading material/papers/articles, some which I had obtained during my taught MA degree. Each person read as they chose to help inform their own thinking and sometimes they would bring in articles to share. I continued to do extensive literature review throughout and to network as much

as possible with others in the field, which is where e-mail and the web was very helpful. We thus became an “informed reading group” as opposed to the traditional “focus group”. As already intimated, we particularly didn’t want to have a “party-line” of thinking/theory/theology which we could then “impose” top-down on others within the organisation. Nor, as researcher/worker did I want to impose my thinking in any way, but what we did want was genuine and authentic dialogue and exploration which took place in depth over a period of time, not just as a business proposition with quick discussions and ideas off the top of our heads. Hence the need for a three year period with continual reflection on our developing insights, action and developments, in a process of deep learning and sharing. I was an insider researcher worker working with co-researchers who were also insiders and together we were working with an organisational vision, mission and remit. Since I was very conscious that I didn’t want to control or influence the group, particularly since I had just “studied” spirituality for my MA, I especially tried to guard against it and any possible manipulation through on-going in-depth personal reflection and also through constantly checking out with the group. Our “research action” itself then was a means by which we were:

- a. becoming more fully informed
- b. were able to be more self-critical as we reflected on the cycles of events and action.

Therefore we were not re-enforcing each others’ party lines but rather were constantly challenging each other and ourselves, thereby offering our own correction against prejudice and discrimination. This, of course, was particularly essential and on-going because of the nature of our vision and mission, which is not to exclude anyone for what ever reason but rather to empower all who come.

Thus our varied research data were obtained from in-depth living in experience through action research spirals, which took place over a length of time. In fact, we learned that there are actually two action research cycles always operating in parallel. The second is the “*reflection cycle*” which is an action research cycle about the action research cycle” which means that at the same time that we engaged in the project’s action research cycles we were also diagnosing, planning, taking action and evaluating how the action research project itself was going and identifying what we were learning. Thus as a research group we were continually inquiring into each of the above steps, asking ourselves how they were being conducted and if they were consistent with each other,

so they could shape and inform the subsequent steps we decided on. In the dynamic of this reflection cycle we were incorporating the learning process, in fact, learning about learning. There are three forms of reflection: *content* where we thought about issues and what was happening, *process* where we thought about how things should be done and *premise* where we critiqued underlying assumptions and perspectives; this forms what Coghlan and Brannick call the “*Meta Cycle of Inquiry*”. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001:18-19) We were therefore always trying to connect our cognitive/heart/intellectual knowing with our affective/head/experiential knowing, since both are valid ways of knowing.

### ***Theory and Practice – research needs***

Because the on-going link between “theory and practice” was a crucial and critical aspect of our research journey, we needed our practice to be informed by other emerging voices and theories in the field of spirituality as well as appreciating that our own emerging practice was also creating theory. Otherwise we could end up in a very non-integrated, unconnected and incongruent and isolated situation particularly since the subject matter for research was new and a new research approach needed to be designed. After much research on how to research, I subsequently was able to identify with relevant voices of some academic feminists who were writing both within the fields of spirituality/theology and research. Reinharz was also helpful in stating that, the integration of activism and scholarship is essential to the emerging feminist consciousness of the last decade, where the objective is not the product but the process, itself the goal of feminist action, that is, the process of continuous change. Feminists do change-orientated research in the hope of empowering, liberating and otherwise assisting specific groups of people where all participants have the combined researcher/subject roles; in such feminist participatory research, the distinction between the researcher and those on whom the research is done disappears. To achieve an egalitarian relation, the researcher thus abandons control and adopts an approach of openness, reciprocity, and mutual disclosure and shared risk. She states that “Feminist Participatory Research” is passionate and engaged scholarship, that passionate research is communal rather than hierarchical and that participatory research is an approach to producing knowledge through democratic, interactive relationships. Researchers work with community members to resolve problems identified by the community and the process of research is to empower participants and the most effective emancipatory



approaches are interactive interviews, in which researchers also self-disclose. (Reinharz, 1992:175-185)

### ***Our research journey continued***

As we continued to meet monthly our group research process continued to progress from the initial starting consideration we each came with which was of the, “I/me” of personal involvement, to then begin to include the “we” of us as a group, as we began to gel and eventually, as we moved on to apply our discoveries, understanding and disseminate our involvement we also became the wider organisational community of “us. The co-researchers were able to reflect and share what they were learning and how their understanding was changing, firstly from *personal* experience, then reflecting as members on the *group* process and then as members of the *organisation*, particularly from within their particular contexts of involvement. It was an on-going necessity then for us to extrapolate principles and theories, which were continually emerging, either implicitly or explicitly from what was happening. They, in turn then, were continually applied on the run with us continuing to learn-in-action within the cycles of Participative Action Research; our research process was not traditional or linear.

In the process of our winding and iterative research journey, we were able to thus progress from what we had begun to understand as “*The Then*” of Holton Lee’s history, founding and legacy. As part of the research process and data collection I searched for founding documents since it was our implicit research mandate to continue to develop responsibly in keeping with the founding vision. After thus identifying and naming the foundations, history and vision, we then “appreciatively” built on what was working rather than changing for the sake of it, living in the “*The Now*” of the present day research and inquiry. In this way our “Spirituality Praxis”, developed through the embodied knowledge and wisdom grown out of and emerging from a group who shared reflection-in-action, collaboratively and participatively. Through our commitment and mutual discernment in this our Participative Action Research Process, we were able to help to co-create the future together, through facilitating transformative and knowledge based change, as the organisation moved towards future praxis which is now, as a result, more informed and written out for future generations of Holton Lee, for “*The*

*Tomorrow*". In this way the roots and vision of the tree have been strengthened with stronger foundations laid for future spirituality praxis.

### ***Understanding and working with knowledge gained in research***

We soon became significantly aware that the process we were in, was itself, the end and way to get the results that we needed and that we needed to stay in this process and not miss out the middle two of the four stages of the *learning cycle* we were in and by staying in it, consequently, we were able to experience deep learning and change. The research was actually a "process of interaction within the process," as a deep learning cycle. In this way our inquiry continued to be a process, not a product and thus the end result of the research is now understood as the by-product of this process (Parffrey web page) As already emphasised our need required us to continually employ fruitful dialogue between critical reflection and participative engagement, but the result of this type of process was that we were continually being tossed between both research needs and development needs and happenings, which were in turn producing chronological outcomes as we continued on our journey. Once we began our journey we needed to stay in it and stay committed to it and it was costly for us as individuals and as an organisation, that is, we had to be committed to put aside our fears, biases, fixed ideas, ideologies, theologies and projections in order to allow the group to evolve and relate in trust and freedom for the sake of the organisation's research needs. It was also very costly in terms of time which has financial costs implied as well. An additional and on-going significant problem had to do with the use of words and language, in our discussions and understanding. We had to learn to resolve conflict, deal with diversity and difference, to learn to respect, honour and value each other's opinions which could lead then to having a shared and authentic discernment for the sake of the organisation. This could then be followed by dissemination that could meet the organisation's need for "shared intent". As stated, there were various and many implications, not least that the organisational structure changed in the midst of our research period but I will describe that in more detail in Chapter Six.

Basically, the research evolved through ten iterative, cyclical and spiral stages which emerged and progressed as a journey from the bottom of roots of the tree growing up the trunk towards the branches, leaves and fruit. The stated need, aim

and goal of the research process to establish informed spirituality praxis was the main theme running throughout the journey or up from the roots of the tree, through the trunk, in order to ultimately produce the necessary fruit within the organisation. The ten cycles are numbered below and also represented in one of my initial tree drawings showing how they emerged from roots and the bottom up which is on the next page “*Key Points of Research – Tree drawing 1*”, diagram 3.

# RESEARCH TREE 1

3

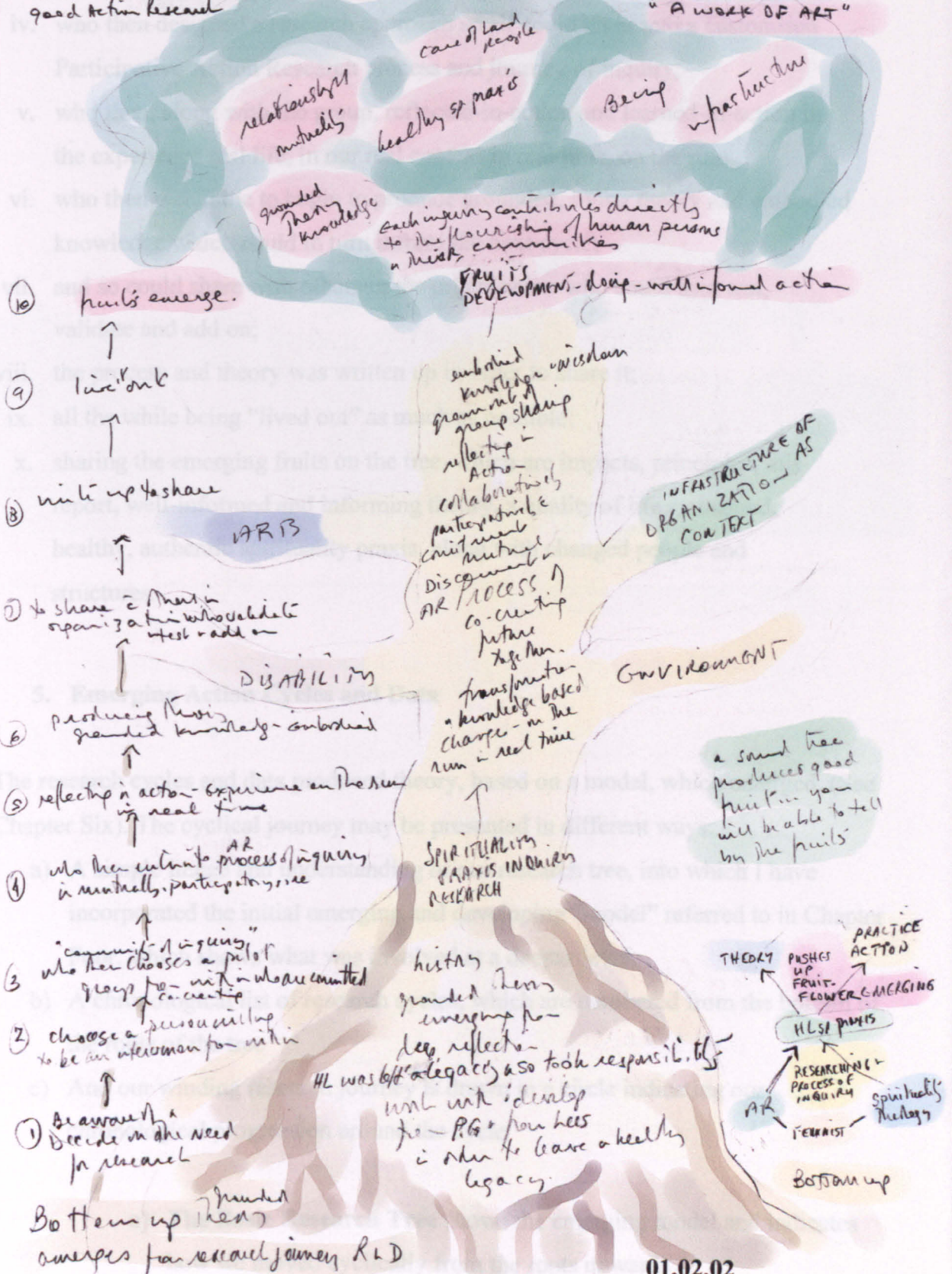
Action Research  
Journey

Done well -  
good Action Research

Key points of Brook / research

combine with the or paper on AR process  
of theory + practice - research journey.

"A WORK OF ART"



01.02.02

- i. becoming aware as an organisation of the need for research;
- ii. finding and choosing a person who would be willing to be an intervenor from within the organisation;
- iii. who then chose a pilot group from within who were committed to be co-researchers and co-creators as a “community of inquiry”;
- iv. who then designed a research approach so all could enter into a customised Participative Action Research process and journey of inquiry;
- v. who then, along with the group, reflected-in-action and learned-in-action in the experience real life, in our real context in real time, on the run;
- vi. who then were able to begin to produce grounded, living theory and embodied knowledge which could in turn inform the next cycle;
- vii. and so could share with others in the organisation who could then test, validate and add on;
- viii. the process and theory was written up in order to share it;
- ix. all the while being “lived out” as much as possible;
- x. sharing the emerging fruits on the tree, which are impacts, principles, this report, well-informed and informing theory, a quality of life and sound, healthy, authentic spirituality praxis, along with changed people and structures.

## **5. Emerging Action Cycles and Data**

The research cycles and data produced theory, based on a model, which emerged. (See Chapter Six). The cyclical journey may be presented in different ways: -

- a) A simple image and understanding of our research tree, into which I have incorporated the initial emerging and developing “model” referred to in Chapter Four, which shows what was involved at a deeper level.
- b) A chronological list of research cycles, which are numbered from the bottom of the roots of the tree
- c) And our winding research journey is drawn in a circle indicating our chronological progression around the cycle

**a) The Basic Research Tree** shows the emerging model and indicates how we moved cyclically from the roots upwards



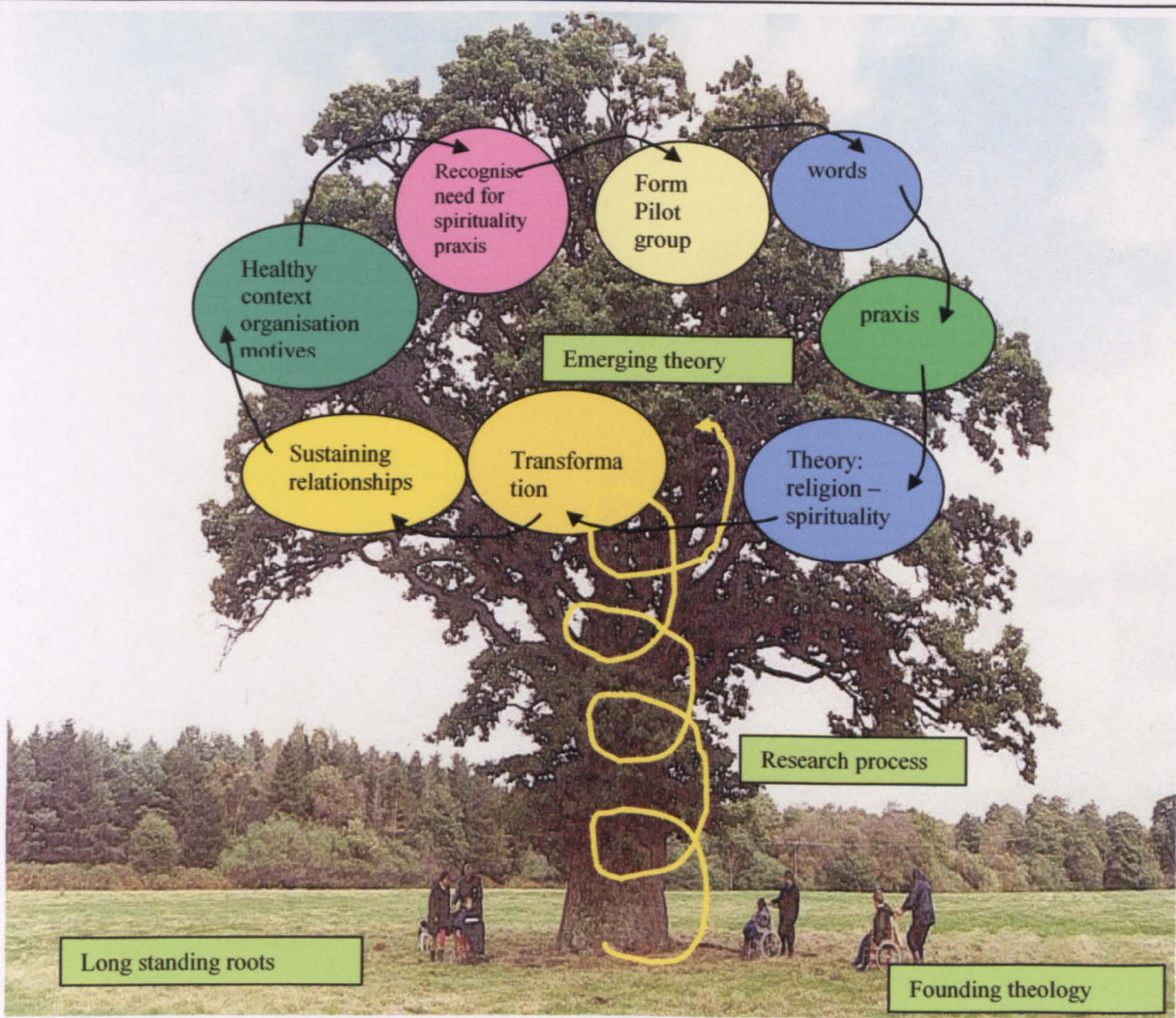


Figure 6 – tree with fruit of model

## **b) A Chronological List of Research Cycles**

### **CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF RESEARCH CYCLES STARTING AT BOTTOM**

2003 – some members of the group read and commented on this report as it was being written

2003 - Interactive policy contribution written

2003 - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts of Job description written

2002 – discussed interactive policy in the spirituality group and then in the Development Group, initially facilitated by Carolyn, then Julie wrote our group contribution to the policy

2002 - Discussion on job description – 2 drafts written

Tony and I discussed the research process and impacts regularly particularly as it affected the organisation itself and we especially discussed Peter Critten's paper and non-linear systems.

June 25 2002 - We had a specific discussion about a "home for the vision" after our research period is completed.

2002 - I summarised and synthesized Faith's book outlining founding principles along with her papers which outlined a Five Year and Twenty Year plan. – the group then discussed and compared with where we are today.

9 January 2002 – we had ½ day group reflection on the 2 ½ year Action Research Process, which was audio taped with notes taken. Summarised and included with 6 action points to follow up.

2002. - I interviewed co-researchers using a proforma and then they each wrote 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing using a proforma I designed.

2001 – Oct and November – I conducted open interviews with six people who represented a cross section of people involved at Holton Lee

October 27<sup>th</sup> 2001 we had a half-day "Awareness-raising" with Trustees, staff, volunteers, a time facilitated by Professor Chris Clarke. Notes were taken, and then a report and questionnaires asking for further feedback were sent out

August 2001 the Spirituality group had a half day discussion on what we each understood "Christian Spirituality" to mean in relation to Holton

2001 - transferred from MProf to DProf and started to develop, in more depth, an appropriate methodology in order to take into account how we could "research" and consider "spirituality development" within "action research".

Based on his report from the day I wrote the first draft of a four page policy on Personal Growth/Spirituality for Holton Lee, which the group then progressed together until we agreed it and the Trustees then ratified and it has been in use since then.

10 January 2001 the Spirituality Group had the same facilitator, Sam Field, for a day to help us to finally settle on the "Spirituality Statement" which we had been trying to write since the groups conception and couldn't quite agree to its wording.

October 2000 - At this point I began the Doctorate at the NCWBLP as agreed by the Trustees and the group continued meeting monthly as it had been. (see scale 1-10)

2000 – Our group reflections highlighted the need for "Awareness-raising" on spirituality within the organisation starting particularly with the Trustees so we could have "shared intent" so the group proposed that 2 of us give a 15 min report at the end of one of their quarterly meetings. That couldn't be fitted in so six months later they decided to take up the proposal seriously and give more time to it and invited an outside facilitator to lead them in a half day discussion about the "vision" for Holton Lee. An unexpected outcome of the day was a complete organisational change ie moving from a hierarchical structure to one of shared flat leadership structure.

2000 – We organised and ran the "Coming Home to Ourselves and the Universe" weekend

1999 - I organised membership with the Sacred Land Project

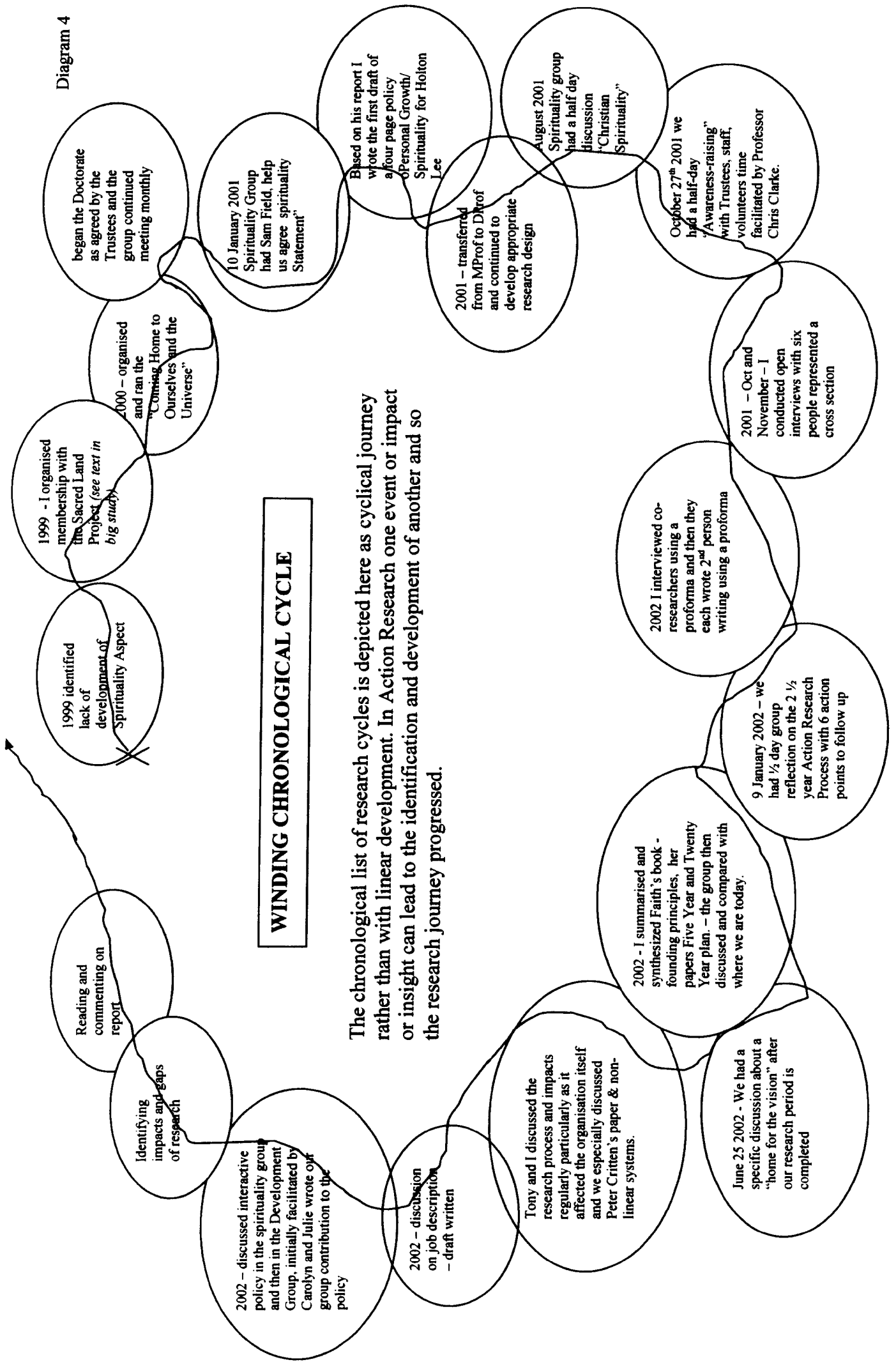
In 1999 I identified lack of development of Spirituality Aspect, as one of the four founding aspects, therefore formed Spirituality Group as agreed by Director and Trustees. We began to meet monthly to address this lack and gap

Figure 7 – chronological list of research cycles

### **c.) Winding Chronological Cycle**

Since our research journey was not pre-planned the data emerged as we responded to unintentional events in the cycle as depicted in diagram 4 on the next page, “*Winding Chronological Cycle.*”

Diagram 4



## 6. Data Described in Depth

The chart below indicates our data sources, which are also listed in chronological order and which will be explained in more detail in the rest of the chapter under those headings and in that order. Since we worked mutually as co-researchers, for this account of our journey, each of the five co-researchers have written extensively from their own perspective, in 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing. I have included what was written, in full in the Appendix and used extracts of it throughout this report. A summary of the open-ended one-two hour interviews with the co-researchers is also included below in Table form. A summary of the interviews of the six others indicating current experience is in the Appendix as indicated previously and a more complete summary is bound separately and held in the resource room at Holton Lee.

### RESEARCH DATA SOURCES

- 1) On-going extensive literature review on spirituality and research approaches
- 2) Notes from monthly spirituality group meetings and discussions
- 3) Notes from my personal research diaries
- 4) Previously written material from Sir Thomas and Lady Lees – in chapter three
- 5) Sacred Land membership - 1999
- 6) Coming Home weekend – Spring 2000
- 7) Raising awareness with Trustees – 2000
- 8) Sam Field consultation day – 10 Jan 2001
- 9) Spirituality Statement and Policy written
- 10) Co-researcher group reflection on Christian Spirituality – August 2001
- 11) Awareness-raising day – 27 Oct 2001
- 12) Summary of Co-researchers' group half-day discussion at end of research period - January 2002
- 13) Current experience - interviews of six others 3<sup>rd</sup> person – in the Appendix
- 14) Artist in Residence writing – in Appendix
- 15) Guests voices and writing – in Appendix
- 16) A chain of evidence - in chapter three
- 17) Interviews of co-researchers – in table
- 18) Research outcomes
- 19) Home for the vision discussion – 25 June 2002
- 20) Job description discussion and drafts
- 21) Interactive policy discussion and development
- 22) 2003 – Interactive policy contribution from Spirituality group written
- 23) identifying research impacts and gaps
- 24) writing and reading report

Figure 8 – research data sources



The “data” collected were continually cycled and re-cycled reflexively as well as through discernment at both individual and group levels as we tried to get to a fuller understanding, which is qualitative, so that we could continue to name and identify what we were experiencing, learning and knowing. We had growing and deeper realisation that to develop the “*Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect*” meant we also had to be able to live it out as informed practice, with an accompanying and growing awareness that none of us can love or change on demand, so therefore change and transformation was implied both individually and as an organisation, so that healthy and mutual relationships and structures could be lived out within the context, not based on “top-down” power or hierarchy but rather on relationships of mutuality and love. I will now describe the data below according to the numbers listed above which are in chronological order according to our journey.

### **1) Literature Review**

On-going and extensive literature review was an utterly essential component to the research project, both on the topic of spirituality and theology and on research methodology. The review continued in-depth throughout the process particularly as new insights and understanding or impacts emerged, through reading on the emerging field of “Spirituality and Work”, research and spirituality, religion and theology and spirituality, Quantum science, transformation, change and shift in thinking and in relationships and about organisations. I have included some of these findings in the form of a table as indicated in Chapter Two. In this Chapter, I have included a summary of some of the reading material on Christian Spirituality. Our concern was that we didn’t want to develop our understanding in isolation and what we learned from literature helped to inform our emerging theories and practice, offer underpinning as necessary and also gave pointers for further research needed within the field as well as offering us an opportunity to offer critique of what others proposed as “theory” from our actual experience and practice.

### **2) Monthly Research Meetings**

Notes and minutes were taken at each of the Spirituality Group meeting and discussions over the three-year period and were analysed according to themes. The research data continued to emerge from these monthly meetings and discussions with the group of six

co-researchers, the content of which I have summarised, and out of which, after two years of discussion, emerged the Spirituality and Personal Growth Statement and an accompanying four page Policy which basically was the result of a day's of facilitation by an external consultant, Sam Field.

A summary overview and analysis of our on-going agenda for monthly meetings included such issues as: advertising and marketing, development of a Policy and Statement of Intent, courses/workshop designs, oversight of Counselling, Retreats and Spiritual Guidance, projected use of Faith House, "Christian" Spirituality and how to understand our roots in our now secular organisation, how to have a "shared vision" within the organisation with the Management group and Trustees, funding and bursary needs, discussion on how to provide resources and oversee facilities, networking, writing literature, how to provide the initiative to take the vision forward, designing reports for Trustees, long term staffing needs in order to develop the aspect, writing Newsletter contributions, an Interactive Policy with the other four aspects and Faith House dedication. We discussed how to organise appropriate volunteers who could spend time with Guests, that is, people who are not patronising and have had Disability Equality Training. We had in-depth discussions about how to both implement and maintain an overall healthy context and infrastructure, which could be conducive to authentic spirituality praxis. Then after I signed up with Middlesex one of the on-going agenda items was to decide together on our "research question and need", the Learning Agreement and then the research activity itself, interviews and finally the writing up. We agreed that the discussions about the research proposal required us to ask questions we would otherwise never have asked and that this systemic hard research would give a sharp focus in what is otherwise a nebulous area. In the midst of our meetings we began to realise that business or developmental agenda conflicted with our need to be able to have enough non-business time to discuss our in-depth concerns and so we re-structured the meeting timing and organised several half day periods so we could discuss certain concerns in depth. We ultimately decided to start our meetings with a short time of meditation or reflection. Throughout the research period, all of us recognised that we each also had on-going interaction within our personal contexts, that is, of church, work, other organisations, networks, study and travel, which was also informative and mutually interactive, as people brought what they learned elsewhere and took what they learned in our research back to their contexts. In this way, the "research cycling" as we

moved to and fro, between experience and reflection (Heron 1996:4, 8) also included the “to and fro” informing of our broader contexts.

### **3) Research Diaries**

My research diaries were extensive, mainly with notes from literature review and from times of reflection and therefore was a source for deliberating on how to progress around the cycle. They also at various points helped me to decide what material to photocopy and share with the co-researchers so they could also have an overview of the field of spirituality with all its complexities.

### **4) Sir Thomas and Lady Lees – Written Material**

As stated in Chapter Three, Sir Thomas and Lady Lees founded Post Green Community and therefore were instrumental in founding Holton Lee as a Charity and in fact donated the land on which it was established. Our essential data collection began then by considering our beginnings and foundings, using Lady Faith Lee’s book, Becoming the Kingdom, written in 1987, on the eve of founding Holton Lee, which in fact basically outlined the principles and founding theology for Holton Lee and also her *Five and Twenty Year Plan* which she wrote just before her death in 1996 as well as extracts from Sir Thomas Lees book also outlined in Chapter Three. This data contains the founding theology and principles, which we needed to compare and build our emerging development of contemporary spirituality so that there was congruence and consistency with the original ethos and intentions. Also as an Organisation we are able to continue to learn from the principles outlined. Therefore I analysed and extrapolated the key principles as relevant data in this research project and have included them in Chapter Three.

### **5) The Sacred Land Project**

We have been members of the Sacred Land Project since 1999. I felt it was important to network with them particularly since the spirituality development and praxis within our organisation is contextualised within 350 acres of SSSI. “Sacred Land was launched in 1997 by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) UK and Alliance of Religions and Conservation (ARC). It was set up as a project of ARC, who have been working at the

international level since 1995 with faith communities and traditions from, primarily eleven world faiths on environmental projects at all scales, in partnership with WWF, The World Bank, Global Environmental Forum, national and local governments among others.” The Times April 24<sup>th</sup> 1997 reported that there was royal backing for the plan to conserve 2,000 Sacred Sites since the Sacred Land Project is supported by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh, along with Archbishop George Carey and sponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature. They wrote, “Sacred sites could help to recapture that vital sense of reverence and encourage a sense of perspective about the place of human beings in the created order.” In a recent Shell Better Britain Newsletter they wrote that “We are all used to the three ‘pillars’ of sustainability: the economic, environmental and the social. Maybe we should introduce a fourth. A new report published this week for Shell Better Britain Campaign through our Community Action for Sacred Land (CASL), partnership concludes that faith, *religion and spirituality* should be given a greater place in sustainable development and that this should start from a local community level.”

## **6) Coming Home Weekend**

One of our first residential workshops was in the spring of 2000, led by Dr Julie Walker and Professor Chris Clarke. It was designed to reflect, as stated in our advertising leaflet, “some of the ways in which environment, creativity and spirituality can naturally be integrated in a holistic approach ... science and spirituality can contribute to one another. There were twenty participants who came from a wide range of backgrounds. The programme included visual presentations of cosmology, a “cosmic walk” tracing the story of the universe, an ecological look at the web of interconnections which have emerged from this story and can be observed around us. The evaluation sheets asked what other themes can you suggest for future courses. They suggested: spiritual aspects of creation, include some work on estate, exploring different religions and spiritualities (paganism, native American, Buddhism), celebration of the earth, spirituality and creativity, bird-watching and natural history, ecology/spirituality themes, follow-up on taking action, implications of modern physics, natural history and fieldwork, creativity-drama, music, art, creative writing, exploring links between quantum theology and teaching of world’s mystics – along lines of Matthew Fox.

## **7) Raising Awareness with Trustees**

In October 1999, the research group decided to bring the need for us to “hold” the founding vision to the forefront of our discussion and agenda. This was necessary so that we didn’t just consider administrative and financial needs. We realised and agreed that we needed to take firm steps so that the vision could be named, described, owned and passed on. We considered the need for an induction course for the vision as well as skills workshops for staff and trustees but recognised that a lot of work would have to be done to prepare for this sort of activity. It took much longer for us as a group to actualise and agree our own understanding of “Personal Growth and Spirituality” than we had expected. We also began to be aware that we didn’t think it appropriate to call our proposed workshops on spirituality, “training” or “teaching” and so began to use the word, “awareness-raising” or consciousness raising instead. We began to propose our fifteen-minute slots for the Trustees in the spring of 2000 on “what is spirituality” but ultimately the first slot only happened on 28 April 2001 which Trustee members of the Spirituality Group, Jeanne and Alan, facilitated.

However, it is significant to note that because we had been suggesting that input and awareness-raising was needed on “Spirituality” from 1999 onwards, the Trustees themselves decided to book an outside facilitator, Sam Field, for August 2000 to work with them together for a half day session so they could look at the vision for Holton Lee together. The unexpected outcome of the day was a complete organisational change and re-structuring, in which the organisation moved from a hierarchical structure to one of shared leadership with the formation of the “Development Group” and “Management Group”. This significant outcome is described in the interviews as outlined in more detail below.

## **8) Sam Field Consultation Day**

We continued to “discuss” and develop our Spirituality Statement and finally on 10 January 2001 we also, as a Spirituality Research Group, had to book Sam Field to facilitate us for a day so that we could finally settle and agree on the wording of the statement, having to go through it “word by word”, so we could all sign up for it. (His report is in Appendix, number 5)



I will now describe the outcomes from the two days of consultation Sam Field gave at Holton Lee: a. the Trustee day and b. the research group day.

*a. Trustees Day August 2000*

Quite surprisingly for everyone this day led to a complete restructuring of the organisation, that is, to one with a more flat and less hierarchical structure. Two groups were formed, one called the “Holton Lee Development Advisory Group (DG) and the other, “Holton Lee Management Advisory Group (MG)”. Terms of reference were written for each group.

In brief, the “DG” is “composed of representatives from each of the four Development Support Groups: Creativity and Arts, Disability and Care, Environment and Personal Growth and Spirituality which will meet every three months. The Aims and Objectives are: “To ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee has a voice both in the structure of the organisation and in building and implementing the vision; to ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee is aware of initiatives taken by all Development Support Groups; to create a structure which will nurture and encourage mutual support for the work of each Development Support Group; to work towards the integration of the activities of all Development Support Groups in such a way as to enable each Group to fully realise their Statement of Intent; to develop the vision of an integrated centre of excellence.” It reports to the full Board of Trustees. The day-to-day management for Holton Lee rests with the Director and Holton Lees’ salaried employees. The DG group is authorised to take decisions and make recommendations within the following areas: Strategy, Use of Property, PR/Marketing and Human Resource. It will receive written reports from MG and will respond via written report to the MG/Trustees.

The “MG” is “appointed by the full Board of Trustees, composed of up to five Trustees or other close supporters of Holton Lee, who are not salaried employees. The Director will always be in attendance. It will meet at least every two months.” Its role is, “to provide, both on its own initiative and in response to matters raised by the Director (or through him by other staff members), the necessary timely decisions and advice to ensure that Holton Lee is run efficiently and as required of a registered UK charity.” It is, “authorised to take decisions within the areas of responsibility defined below, subject to a duty to refer to the full Board of Trustees any matters embracing serious financial

implications and/or internal or external sensitivities.” Areas of responsibility are: Finance, Fund Raising, Property, PR/Marketing and Human Resources. They will receive written reports from DG and will respond via written report to DG/Trustees. These policies are in the Appendix number 6.

*b. The Spirituality Group Consultation Day – January 2001*

The Consultation focused on finalising our *Spirituality Statement*, which then read:

“At Holton Lee, we believe spirituality to be both personal and social, challenging us to reclaim connections with ourselves, others, the sacred and our world. It is inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience, thus integrating body, mind and spirit and facilitating personal growth. Such growth comes from discovering our inner potential and growing into the fullness of who we are created to be, recognising our interdependence with one another and the world we belong to.”

Our day with Sam led us on to another part of the cycle which was a recognition of a need and then plan to have an awareness-raising day which took place in October 2001.

**9) Spirituality Statement and Policy**

Based on Sam’s report, I was then able to write a four page Personal Growth and Spirituality Policy, which was discussed, edited and ratified by the Research Group and then ultimately ratified and agreed by the Trustees on 1 August 2001. It has been in place and used formally by the organisation since then, which is in the Appendix number 7.

**10) Co-researcher Group Reflection on Christian Spirituality**

In August 2001 we had a half-day discussion as a group to explore in depth what we understood “Christian” spirituality to mean within our specific and particular context. That concern is still on-going but as a result of that discussion we decided to refrain from using the word “Christian” in our literature and statements because we recognised that it could offend and exclude some people at Holton Lee which was inappropriate especially since we have a policy of including all people. Prior to the discussion I handed out various articles/papers for the group to read as they chose. Since the focus

for our research was an integration of “Personal Growth and Spirituality”, as one of the named Aspect groups, the selection below reflects such consideration of the personal and spiritual, that is, the divine and human or spiritual and psychological integration. The list and handouts were very limited but gave a brief overview of current issues, concerns and developments in the fields concerned. (For a summary see Appendix number 8)

Each co-researcher chose what to read and focus on. Obviously too, there was constant and rich interface and interchange as each co-researcher made links between their involvement in Holton Lee and with their other life contexts. We were continually learning from each other. The role of study in an integrated spirituality increases in proportion to one’s intellectual capacity and formation and this growing and deepening learning was something which continued throughout. The interviews reflect the fact that we grew both in our cognitive understanding of spirituality as well as in our own spiritual praxis, both at personal and organisational levels. (Noffke, 1993:948-949) The research group also wrote an A4 page in each of Holton Lee’s quarterly Newsletters over the past three years giving relevant updates thereby also attempting to disseminate our growing understanding to our growing number of 1500 readers. Recognising our understanding of the overall importance of “study” within the field of spirituality we could also say now that any organisation wishing to develop spirituality praxis should also consider the need for study within their context in order to be able to embrace an authentic, informed and sound theory of spirituality.

### *Spirituality” lived” at Holton Lee*

After two years of process we had a Spirituality Statement and Policy. The co-researchers each have given their understanding and perspectives about Holton Lee’s spirituality praxis, both through what they said in their interviews and in their 2nd person writing.

This writing was done according to a “Proforma” which I designed as part of the research with questions grouped around topics or themes, which needed further exploration and understanding. In brief they are: Spirituality at Holton Lee, Christian Spirituality, Spirituality and the other three Aspects, identifying what practice is working and how do we monitor the ethos and vision? What is written obviously

indicates in some measure what we have learned during our research and have subsequently been able to understand more deeply, thereby naming and comprehending theories about spirituality which informed our practice as we progressed in through our spirals and cycles. My intention in asking for 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing was that I wouldn't then "interpret" what was written but include it as it was written, with the co-researchers' own style and voice. But now I have discovered that space obviously won't permit all that was written to be included in the body of this report so it is included, in full in the Appendix. However I have not précised what is included here with the understanding that if there is repetition those particular points are therefore more emphasised and should be noted as such. However I did have to summarize the interviews because of word count.

Key extracts of 2nd person writing on "spirituality" are included below:

*Jean wrote:* We believe that spirituality is personal and social, an integration of body, mind and spirit. Discovering our inner potential and coming into fullness of life. This understanding came from our Christian faith and the ethos of Post Green Community. We recognise the teaching of Jesus was for the fullness of life for individuals and spreading into society to change it.

*Alan wrote:* The Groups' understanding of Spirituality is recorded in our statement appearing earlier in this paper and is implicit in both the Mission and vision statements of Holton Lee. This, together with the spirituality policy document, is now a reference point for all involved with Holton Lee and will need to be revisited at regular intervals. At Holton Lee, I believe that there is an increased looking for and expectation of seeing God in all things. There is belief in the equal value of each individual, whether working or staying at Holton Lee, and the importance of their contribution to its life. It is working for the best for both workers and guests. It is seen primarily in the way in which people relate to each other, working as a number of small teams within one big team, without an imposed management. Without the ethos of 'love and care', spirituality at Holton Lee would be an empty phrase! Although not all at Holton Lee would claim to be of the Christian faith, most acknowledge the spiritual element, and there is an acceptance of and respect for our differences. It is not possible to get away from the Christian roots of Holton Lee, founded as it was by Post Green, an ecumenical Christian community. However, in the Christian thinking over twenty-five years ago this community was radical rather than rigid in its approach to spiritual matters and the responsibility of Christians to be involved in society and was visionary in its outlook. These are the roots from which Holton Lee has sprung still have a considerable influence upon the way in which it works, although involved members of the community are now few. One of the benefits of meeting as a research group has been the growing conviction that in our endeavour to be inclusive and not exclusive, we should not be ashamed of our specifically Christian roots. To do so would be a denial of the truth and would be lacking in integrity. As we have met, related, discussed and debated, and tried to raise awareness of spirituality, I have been surprised at how much common ground we have with each other in the Group and with so many others

involved with Holton Lee. The question is - why should I be surprised? Why not expect it?

## **Christian Spirituality: Our Dilemma**

In August 2001 we set aside a half day for an in-depth discussion on “Christian Spirituality” in order to try to find some deeper understanding of our continuing dilemma. We are now a secular charity, with a policy which states that we are inclusive of all people and we have strong Christian roots and foundation, as Alan has written above. We are also placed within today’s “spirituality climate”, as part of the smorgasbord available to others. Our mission states that we include all people in our ethos of care and love and we obviously don’t want to impose any ideologies, theologies or beliefs of any sort on them. However, as already stated in various parts of this report, people today are very nervous of anything religious or to do with Church or “religion”, often because of unpleasant or hurtful past experiences within the “institution”. Therefore we do try to be especially careful, open and inclusive by not initiating any discussion or suggesting any particular theory or theology. By design and intention, our “Spirituality Statement” is very inclusive, but when some guests have heard the word, “Christian” mentioned by chance, within our context they get fearful and alarmed. As a group and organisation we don’t have a “party-line” or agreed theology; we are simply trying to integrate spirituality with care, in our context, appreciating as our mission statement states, that we are whole beings, made up of psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects and needs.

## **Group Discussion**

We began our time with prayer and silence focusing on the idea of “spirituality” not having a formula but rather understood more broadly as love. We asked ourselves two questions: firstly why are we even having this discussion and secondly what will we do with what we produce? I have included a summary of key points below.

*Alan* said that we discussed spirituality as a whole in a wide-ranging way for the past two years, but we are also known to have an ecumenical and Christian ethos with Post Green Community as founders so we will inevitably be asked questions. We don’t need to have a stated answer or statement but at least to know and understand between ourselves what we believe. A sentence from the Memorandum of Articles of Holton Lee states that we are to include, “The advancement of the Christian religion in particular



(but not so as to limit the generality of the foregoing) in the context of the pursuit of the other objects of the Company.”

*Jeanne* stated that her concern is that others’ understanding and definition of “Christian” may be different from hers and more narrow than ours is, yet we don’t want to exclude others. All agreed that if someone new comes we could share our guidelines. We can be inclusive and yet have a Christian base especially important with Faith House.

*Tony* said that it is similarly challenging and exciting in the same way that “arts” is, particularly when exhibited in Faith House, that is, can we allow Art to open a dialogue or do we want to censor it?

*Carolyn* said that she hoped our discussion would lead to some sort of “shared intent” with Trustees, staff and volunteers, so we can understand Christian Spirituality and Spirituality in general within the organisation. She said that her Doctoral research includes consideration of the Christian perspective and added that perhaps we should aim to produce a paper to add as an addendum to the policy.

We asked ourselves if we have the right to refuse any person or group, which asks to come to Holton Lee? Our suggestion was that we would need to consider individual cases and kept reminding ourselves that we are a secular organisation coming from Christian roots, which is trying to be “inclusive”.

*Jean* said that Christian Spirituality is the working out of Jesus’ teaching through the Holy Spirit and Christ’s way, with love and respect, with consideration and value of people, the environment, and those on the margins, living as He said and this has huge implications. It is difficult to do it all, that is, with concerns for: justice, peace, healing, environment, caring, with the wider vision so some just focus on the aspects they can. The key is to meet people where they are and lead them on from there and the same at Holton Lee asking where is God in this? We always need to ask this question since our basis is love and encouraging people.

*Julie* said she has a similar understanding with the person of Christ and how he lived his life encouraging others. Our understanding will overlap with others and we need to be open with greater breadth and provide opportunities for people

*Tony* said that he found the discussion liberating and personally found it moving to have attended Post Green camp worship in the past but asks what can now happen in Faith House and where will this energy come from, to do the worship?

### **Further Questions and Emerging Discussion**

Someone asked if we are a para-church saying that some people may even think that we are a cult since we are Christian. We recognise that cults do spring up overnight so Alan asked if we need oversight and protection suggesting that since we have “Aspects Groups” perhaps each aspect needs a consultant. We recognise that we are still holders

of the faith and therefore have a responsibility. Tony said that cults are usually around one aspect and the fact that we have four, which inform each other, helps to keep us from becoming isolated. Discernment is necessary in all aspects too, providing objectivity; part of the discernment is in having and referring to policies, which exist. Alan suggested that Christian Spirituality must be individual too. We agreed that the Memorandum and Articles don't limit us with its wording since we don't have to convert everyone!

We agreed not to have a set liturgy but perhaps various ones for each of the seasons and that we could have prayer in Faith House on a regular basis with a short liturgy. We reminded ourselves of the liturgy which we wrote for the "Pilgrimage" which could now be made available as a resource. We had a Millennium event called "The Journey into Prayer" which started in October 1999 and culminated in June 2000. During this period groups were organised to meet monthly for a time of prayer and reflection during the year and part of their focus was drawn to the needs and concerns for the environment as they reflected on Holton Lee. These groups then joined together for a "Pilgrimage" to walk around Holton Lee stopping at key points on the site, in order to have a time of meditation for the work being done within the Charity and as preparation for Faith House, which was being designed. At that point planning permission had also been turned down so we were in the midst of re-applying. The pilgrimage ended with a dedication service on the spot where Faith House was to be built.

We agreed that when Faith House was built we could be spontaneous as well as having different liturgy rather than something set. We could also keep a folder with examples of what we have done. We also agreed that our discussion was energising for each of us, recognising that different gifts are resident amongst us, which can carry it forward as well as involving others outside of Holton Lee, believing that when we make a start ourselves and it all starts rolling lots of people will come out of the woodwork and offer help.

Our understanding was increasingly one of an inclusive spirituality, which suggests that a paradigm shift is required so that those who are dominant and those who are oppressed must both changed in order to live in a new community, in relational power. More of this understanding will be developed in Chapter Six, while also considering in more depth what is understood by "theology" and "spirituality" since that is one of the

initial areas of mis-understanding we had in our research process and also because our task was to integrate the founding theology with a contemporary theory of spirituality for the organisation.

### **11) Awareness-raising Day**

On 27 October 2001 we had an “awareness-raising” half-day, for Trustees, Staff and Volunteers, with thirty people attending. The day was jointly facilitated by Professor Chris Clarke and the Spirituality research group. We welcomed the thirty people who took part comprising staff, trustees and volunteers and introduced the reason for the day which was to become more aware of spirituality. Jeanne told some of her story about Holton Lee. She then asked each to consider for 10-15 minutes what the word spirituality meant to them; what experiences came to mind, recognising that our responses will vary enormously. Then there was a time for feedback. She also read some quotes from explanations of the work hanging in the Farm House, from artists James Wear, ‘Holton Lee is a very spiritual place, something that I had not openly explored before ...’ and artist Diego Ferrari, ‘nature can represent a mirror of our inner reality, our immediate life.’

Jean then highlighted the fact that the Four Aspects can be experientially integrated at Holton Lee. People were given little maps, invited to walk on the site and then given paints, coloured paper and pencils so they could draw, paint or write about what they experienced. They came back and shared in four groups of eight putting up one word impressions on a flip chart. After the tea break Chris facilitated an “earthing session” which explored the idea if we could end up with some sort of common understanding and shared intent about “spirituality” at Holton Lee. After a short discussion about how to earth our understanding of spirituality we again broke up into groups according to our area of involvement, to discuss more in depth and then returned to the large group to share. Some of the feedback included comments or questions such as: balancing community with the whole group and other aspects? What holds it all together is love, togetherness, more days learning from each other, Holton Lee is a state of mind.” We explored what it means to live out “spirituality” at Holton Lee on a practical day-to-day basis. The concepts were summarised by Chris as follows: touching base, something big and deep, a point to slow down and stop, how do we go on?, how do we do this more often?, Holton Lee = us, how to explain it?, how to earth it?

Each person was then sent a recap of the day. A few weeks later I sent out a brief questionnaire, based on the recap, to all who attended asking for further personal input so they could continue to be part of the process of shaping the continuing development of the Spirituality Aspect, stating that their participation was very important to us.

It asked:

- what did you personally learn/experience about spirituality
- if anything new had emerged
- if they had experienced anything within the group which met; did anything emerge?; what is your understanding of spirituality within the organisation?
- How can we earth it and live it out; in what way would you like spirituality to be further developed and can you suggest anything to enable that?
- Finally they were asked for any further comments.

Six people sent their questionnaires and one rang with his. I think many staff and those of us in the group and some of the trustees didn't fill them in since they think that they are involved on a more frequent basis anyway. Four staff members commented:

- One said she had found it interesting particularly since spirituality is very new to her but that the day made her look at things differently. It was fun and everyone mingled and got-on well. She is unsure how it all fits into the organisation since it more personal in how we think about and see things.
- Another wrote that she felt we talked more about Holton Lee than "spirituality" and she gave a dictionary definition of spirituality which was "a spiritual quality which belongs to the Church and its estates; spiritual – of the spirit as opposed to matter, especially the soul – proceeding up to God." She wrote that the peace, hope and love along with the bees, birds, flora and fauna has a great effect on guests and on the day she herself had time to stand in the forest and drink everything in, with a chance to chat to others. She feels spirituality is more a commitment to God and didn't know if just enjoying nature at Holton Lee was spirituality as well.
- Another said on the walk the spiritual and physical became connected in her thoughts which she attributed to the fact that she was on a special day on "spirituality at Holton Lee" which made her focus, otherwise normally she would think other thoughts, for example, where the land boundary lines are. She believes that one or some of us must have had a visualization for spirituality within the organisation for it to be happening now and that it must still be an on-going thought which the spirituality awareness-raising day proved. She wrote, "I think Holton Lee is and always was a beautiful place, maybe because of nature and its situation, but if we think of it as a home for the wild life, a place for respite care and disabled artists, then that is what it is and only that, if we think of it as a spiritual place then that is what it is too. So keep visualizing and the likes of us who work here will keep benefiting from being at Holton Lee."



- The Care Manager raised a concern that spirituality didn't become disenfranchised as a separate aspect from the entire ethos of Holton Lee but rather was seen as underpinning the whole ethos. She wasn't convinced that those present understood the holistic approach rather saw spirituality as a separate entity or optional branch which people could dip in and out of.
- The Counsellor said the day affirmed the awareness that spirituality is in "all of life", the environment, people, caring, self-development, creativity, dialogue, process, connecting, universal and cosmic. Holton Lee seems to reflect all of this. During the day she sensed a lot of energy around along with a sense of community and the need for connection but asked how can that happen at Holton Lee? We earth it within the organisation by continuing to live it out making more connections between the Four Aspects and by burrowing deeper into each to discover what jewels may be underneath, perhaps with dialogue between the four aspects and maybe with another day to see how they all connect with and support each other.
- One of the Trustees said he was aware that what came through is that Holton Lee is not just a place but a state of mind and was grateful that personal beliefs weren't imposed which makes him cringe. Instead he felt we held up a mirror on the day in which he could see a cohesion of Holton Lee's brotherhood and sisterhood, which he felt was an affirmation.

## 12.) Spirituality Group Half Day of Reflection on Research Activity

On 9 January 2002 the Spirituality Group had a half day group reflection on the two and one half year Action Research process which was audio taped and notes were taken and we now have six action points to follow up. This half day reflection and discussion indicates a summary of the whole research process in the group from its beginning in the Spring of 1999 to January 2002. It was focused under three headings, in a letter, which I sent out before our time together, which were:

- a. Where we were;
- b. Where we are now
- c. Where do we want to get to?

This reflection obviously adds a different dimension since the data emerged in the process of a group discussion rather than in individual reflection alone and therefore represents a shared voice, to some degree, since that was our aim.

*Key points which emerged* It is important to experience "with" people. It is not a "them and us", not making impositions but we recognised that spirituality is all lived out together.



- We have ended up more on the same wavelength, with shared intent, going in the same direction, as “family” at heart level and not just theory. Spirituality involves us at heart and head level not just with theory
- We were able to model our facilitation on the awareness-raising day and people changed as a result of the day.
- The research group created energy as a catalyst and driving generator, thereby seeding insight and understanding across the organisation, percolating across to the other aspects. Thereby we were not becoming compartmentalised as an aspect group and now we resonate more with the same frequency.
- The four aspects are implicit in the ethos and philosophy and continually need to be balanced up. Each aspect is part of the other aspects, which requires each of us to sign up to all of them, which then becomes part of our lives in total. We need further policy to be written to show each of the four aspect group policies overlap.
- To work at Holton Lee is more than a job, which is different than other places.
- Spirituality does not exist in abstract boxes but undergirds everything at Holton Lee
- Through the research process people have changed.
- Holton Lee still is a place of refuge, a safe place of love, restoration, care and learning and is therefore fulfilling its long-standing and current vision.
- The world is skewed up but at Holton Lee we have changed how we live, not in accordance with the current worldview, but with the view of the founding vision.
- Community is a fragile thing because people need to let go of personal opinions and be willing to compromise for the good of the whole in order to preserve and maintain a sense of wholeness, to keep from being divisive.
- To be spiritual means being in tune with nature.
- As an organisation we still need cutting edge teaching in each aspect.

### *A Summary of the Discussion*

- What underlined the research process was the original vision and as we met, the need for the research became clearer.
- We learned that our research and development had been based on the original vision all along

- Because we didn't base it on theological discussion but on broad statements, for example, of love, we were able to look at the heart not differences
- We listened to and respected each other
- Initially the concept of spirituality seemed nebulous with us each firing in different directions.
- We needed the focus of having to write a "spirituality statement" together.
- This included back and forth discussion
- We started with the researcher's worldview and learned not to start with conclusions but instead from the bottom-up, while continually asking questions.
- We gained heightened awareness and deeper learning versus that of being narrow with fixed opinions.
- The research process facilitated us individually, as a group and organisation to make the paradigm shift and transformation, from the *linear dominant old paradigm* to the *inclusion paradigm*, as we learned deeply from each other and focused on broad statements, not theological differences, in back and forth discussions; in the process people were changed.

- 13) **Current Experience** - interviews of six others 3<sup>rd</sup> person - Appendix number 4
- 14) **Artist in Residence Writing** – Appendix number 4
- 15) **Guests Voices and Writing** – Appendix number 4
- 16) **A Chain of Evidence** - in chapter three
- 17) **Interviews of Co-researchers**

The key points from the co-researchers' interviews are highlighted below in the form of a table. Before each of their two hour open ended individual interviews I prepared a briefing sheet for myself based on their context and experiences within the organisation in order to ensure that all necessary aspects were covered during the interview which in the Appendix number 9. These interviews were supplemented by their responses to a specially designed proforma for 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing. (See Appendix number 10) and the full script of their written responses is given in Appendix number 11. The proforma responses elaborated and confirmed the "key points" which are given in the Table

below. A more extensive summary of key points from their interviews is in the Appendix number 12.



TONY				ALAN				JULIE				JEANNE				JEAN							
PERSONAL				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic principles call and vocation</li><li>• Spirituality woven throughout</li><li>• Spooky – non explainable happenings – intangible things</li><li>• He didn't come to start a faith or spiritual journey but feels that more dramatically than anything else</li><li>• Intrigued that people leave spirituality door open and you just walk through</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Faced own mortality – now different spiritual exploration and journey</li><li>• Am a feeling and not academic person so awareness and “journey” is important not just “doing”</li><li>• Idea of Finding God under every stone – earthed spirituality for him</li><li>• Connect head and heart levels</li><li>• Need to spend time here in order to understand spirituality at HL otherwise won't work</li></ul>								<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I learned in group affirming experience</li><li>• Even with different backgrounds</li><li>• Good to have been given papers to read</li><li>• Deep on-going experience</li><li>• We are cutting ground</li><li>• We are track too with other groups around the world</li><li>• Experiencing new way of being church here</li><li>• Stretching boundaries re spirituality</li><li>• Others in group drawn me into deeper awareness</li></ul> <p>Done spade work and now work through what has been thrown up in deeper way</p>							
GROUP				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group disparate but got close with intense discussions with incredibly good nature</li><li>• had fear of being exploited re</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group free to explore as individuals in the group then changed the group</li><li>• Honesty and not skirt about issues, and face conflict</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In group learned whole process of listening and respecting each others views and not hold too tightly to our own ways of seeing things</li><li>• May have been closer 10</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We learned to listen and give space to each other</li><li>• Even when group not easy and in struggle but wanting to come to grips</li></ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spirituality involves thinking and learning</li><li>• Process and actual living it is important</li><li>• Community of “us” fruit of spirituality group process</li><li>• Each had own way of</li></ul>			



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>religion</li> <li>didn't want watered down statement and got good policy and statement and didn't manipulate to get it</li> <li>Time important – not to rush process or have quick fix</li> <li>Helped Alan inform other trustees – a structural thing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christian spirituality – particularly difficult</li> <li>How we shared and received from each other and honouring – qualities and authentic experience</li> <li>Corporate spiritual director needed so not incestuous?</li> <li>more difficult than anticipated to reach spirituality statement</li> <li>And surprised needed policy then to reflect statement</li> <li>We will never “arrive” at a conclusion</li> <li>Need space in meetings to roam</li> <li>Group has become safe place to share</li> <li>Not imposing power of spirituality group but how we related and live it – not taught but caught – connecting with others</li> <li>Otherwise hypocrisy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>years ago denominationally</li> <li>Now each on very different part of journey</li> <li>Which also gives us a common ground and we know the language therefore even if not what we think</li> <li>Difficult if we say we are inclusive to have organisational understanding of spectrum of spirituality at HL</li> <li>Will be such individual cases always</li> <li>Therefore we have to be broader and that is very challenging</li> <li>Way we held meeting too business like at first, frustration and not time to listen properly</li> <li>Discussed and changed it then to have blocks of time for relaxed discussion on a topic.</li> <li>Always too much agenda in Business meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All seemed to know not to give up since spirituality so important for HL</li> <li>Now more free to do symbolic things</li> <li>Discovered new dimension of working together</li> <li>Introduced spirituality to trustees in 10 min bites.</li> <li>Group involved in undergirding ethos and how people experience themselves in the org &amp; how conflict is dealt with</li> <li>We have very gentle watching brief</li> <li>Yet is everybody's responsibility</li> <li>Spirituality is about respect for each other and if org is not acting respectably then no integrity or integration</li> <li>It is “lived out” since guests feel welcomed, name the love they experience</li> <li>Also in care of environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>thinking</li> <li>Sparked each other off</li> <li>Supplemented each other</li> <li>Think we are on same level only to realise we are not all understanding the same thing</li> <li>Different backgrounds re spirituality</li> <li>Take personalities into account</li> <li>So need wide range</li> <li>Respect where people are at and learn from each other</li> <li>Learning about spirituality creeps up on you</li> <li>Learned from and challenged by your questions therefore made to think</li> <li>Think people in group were on same wave length then aren't and vice versa</li> <li>We challenge each other</li> <li>Tony and Alan bring in theory and practical</li> <li>But need to move beyond talk to practice</li> <li>And discover how to do at practical level</li> <li>Learning from each other that things don't just happen either, but make them</li> </ul>
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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Justice for all people</li> <li>• Important to name and articulate what is going on, what experienced, what being looked and searched for.</li> <li>• Gaps in communicating decisions – find another model?</li> <li>• Since so many levels of management, so many groups</li> <li>• Another is to find ways to integrate non disabled</li> </ul>	<p>happen, how, what, who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Started at bottom and worked way up rather than start at top</li> <li>• Asking what we are about first –big and vague subject or something New Age when you mention it</li> <li>• Careful of terminology</li> <li>• A challenge from absolutes brought up with ...</li> <li>• the group widened her horizons looking into spirituality by considering questions</li> <li>• Also with others start in simple terms recognising all have spiritual element they may not recognise</li> </ul>
<p><b>ORGANISATION</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extraordinary commitment exists</li> <li>• Incredibly strong ethos</li> <li>• Keeping an eye on the vision</li> <li>• Not only a business thing</li> <li>• No assessment on value of the land</li> <li>• Organisation – like chaos theory with S</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What and where did HL learn from?</li> <li>• Organisation Trustees needs this heart level involvement – to spend time at HL</li> <li>• Living out spirituality in loving relationships</li> <li>• Need persistent gentle nurturing – precious and fragile in whole organisation</li> <li>• 4 aspects integrated – we flagged up need –</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the beginning aware &amp; highlighted how organisation was structured completely out of tune with what we were talking about, very tense within whole org</li> <li>• Very destructive to whole organisation – we had no power because those who made decisions didn't share our awareness</li> <li>• Now different not same frustration and pressure – a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organisation – HL grew out of long history</li> <li>• After group process we opened spirituality to whole organisation</li> <li>• Write up what happened on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct Awareness Raising Day is important</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And created 4 Aspects groups</li> <li>• Therefore more strong now non hierarchical and that culture has permeated organisation</li> <li>• HL is radical in its set up as an org</li> <li>• We put sound and helpful foundation</li> <li>• Takes time to build peoples' personal confidence but is empowering</li> <li>• Qualities needed- Equality, trusting, responsibility, empowering</li> </ul>	<p>interrelationship and integration of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and need for vision to be held in responsible small group</li> <li>• Organisation - HL is a community with implications for tomorrow</li> <li>• Secular organisation – not impose but just be real and natural</li> <li>• Equal opportunity – interview new staff recognise spirituality as our sense of identity</li> <li>• Structural change from S. Field allowed shared power and responsibility with DG and MG groups and community</li> <li>• Disability not “to” people - not power</li> </ul>	<p>big shake-up in structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So energy generated by this group had direct and non-direct influence within org- significant</li> <li>• Still big gap in personnel management</li> <li>• Director as part of group influenced power? with his influence across the board?</li> <li>• 4 aspects – always indiv choice</li> <li>• took long time for sp group to be clear itself about awareness-raising – what trying to do and who for.</li> <li>• Spirituality a slow gradual imperceptible process- can only see cusp</li> <li>• “7<sup>th</sup> Oct very significant day – people realised things and made connections.</li> <li>• Not “done by” us but we created space</li> <li>• Didn't impose definitions</li> <li>• Sp manifest by being in relationships</li> <li>• Organisation can help provide environment to facilitate people to live that way.</li> <li>• Principles - Can't organise it or ensure spirituality but</li> </ul>	
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IMPACTS AND TOMORROW</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomorrow now less worried about Business and finances – act of faith</li> <li>• People more clear about their roles</li> <li>• Spirituality is woven throughout</li> <li>• Have clear aims and principles</li> <li>• Fruits of process</li> <li>• Organisation would be much weaker</li> </ul>		<p>can name/ hold vision then those who visit can see if not same as we say.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that is only check or way to monitor</li> <li>• can only encourage sp praxis and create conditions in which nurtured.</li> <li>• Notice blocks</li> <li>• Need somebody or group to keep finger on pulse</li> <li>• To present courses would provide focus help people explore for themselves</li> </ul> <p>Need to explore 4 aspects integration since diff levels of recognition</p>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a market for audiences?</li> <li>• Process beneficial with impact on the organisation and management structure</li> <li>• We would be more business like, commercial and money orientated if no research</li> <li>• More functional, clinical and professionally concerned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impacts - We recognised a vital part of original vision had almost got lost and we are trying to re-find it.</li> <li>• Can't have shared intent with trustees since the capacity for depth is only in a few</li> <li>• But can then share more superficially with rest of org</li> <li>• Recognise motives for spirituality – bandwagon or part of vision?</li> <li>• May have been greater</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christianity – like anything to do with interfaith. not water down but exchange otherwise HL is weak</li> <li>• May need to have specific workshop</li> <li>• Management –not easy to be trustees re money, charity stuff, but excited about sharing responsibility re ethos with spirituality group</li> <li>• Both have same remit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact - Lives have been changed by staying here – aware of different dimension to life</li> <li>• Starts an on-going process, not by “telling” what you know</li> <li>• 4 aspects - Starts too with land and care and arts, see more dimension to life</li> <li>• Opens eyes, sense of satisfaction to produce art</li> <li>• Volunteers recognise something here want to be part of developing</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People would not have grown</li> <li>• We are more authentic</li> <li>• Structure is better</li> <li>• Spirituality group monitor spirituality and keep finger on pulse</li> <li>• With a strong spirituality going on to make it happen</li> <li>• And it has been a pathfinder for the other aspects.</li> <li>• Buildings opened up</li> <li>• Understand which set of principles for spirituality or Christian spirituality?</li> <li>• Still need to Overcome barriers for Christianity and disability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not valued as much and less personal development.</li> <li>• Not language of academia but heart felt and body language</li> <li>• A book people can pick up and enjoy and used by those starting similar orgs</li> <li>• Links with Faith's book</li> <li>• Disability and equal opportunity important</li> </ul>	<p>disintegration in org without research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We flagged up need for place to hold and nurture vision</li> <li>• Put in simple language – wording an issue especially re faith or no faith.</li> <li>• Others in group had to catch up with Carolyn and I and took a long time</li> <li>• She was able to identify with Faith's vision</li> <li>• All came from different places spiritually</li> <li>• Important to get management on board</li> <li>• Define statement and who would read it and what we wanted to say.</li> <li>• Enabled us to focus and find meeting place amongst us.</li> <li>• Communicate - needed to find right way of listening to each other and to</li> <li>• Write something we could all sign up to without watering it down</li> <li>• And it sounded a bit nebulous at first</li> <li>• Needed a smaller group delegated to thrash out</li> </ul>	<p>for this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualities need a range and to affirm each other's gifts</li> <li>• Faith's book - Vision takes long time to work out from Lees and Faith and community</li> <li>• Incredibly strong so guests still feel it today</li> <li>• Ethos and positive is stronger than negative</li> <li>• Takes a long time to work through a very solid and enabling vision</li> <li>• Tomorrow and impact -if you had not engaged in research no doubt that wouldn't have been such a good base for building the future, not well thought through</li> <li>• Monitor and keep healthy – may also need outside spiritual consultant</li> <li>• We have been naming impacts and principles all along in interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is in the place – meet God in different ways</li> <li>• See in care of land and people, wherever care and love is given</li> <li>• Helps people expand, grow and open up</li> <li>• Massage and touch are important</li> <li>• Impact - In research process we build a foundation and base to work from</li> <li>• Now know where we are coming from as a group</li> <li>• Has taken time to grow and build together</li> <li>• Need to hire someone but don't know yet exactly what sort of person or job, until we can start putting on workshops, put into practice then will know what we want them to do</li> <li>• otherwise a gap</li> <li>• they will need to be liaison pastoral person, with heart and feel for place and can keep/hold vision and ethos</li> <li>• put something in place for future</li> <li>• deal with personality clashes, spiritual and pastoral concerns and gifts</li> </ul>
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		<p>word by word to write a statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Christianity still a big issue in group and outside – a sensitive area</li> </ul> <p>Lots of assumptions not yet surfaced since can use same words but understanding something different.</p>	<p>so make a list of them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audiences – look back at Sam Field notes and bring list to meeting to see what is missing so is organic process</li> <li>4 aspects all 4 groups have to take responsibility to integrate aspects from each other</li> </ul> <p>yet not trying to inscribe something rigidly in stone</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take it to next stage</li> <li>they will need backup advisory group</li> <li>this group gelled so can offer that</li> <li>vision can be picked up eg Tony didn't arrive with it</li> <li>otherwise only a centre run without the ethos with its long background</li> <li>takes time to pick up especially if certain people left now</li> </ul> <p>4 aspects can offer something different here with environment, arts, disability and spirituality integrated, seeing everyone as important and being inclusive and place accessible</p>
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Key points of learning at personal, group and organisational levels, which emerged from these open-ended interviews, are summarised below and a more full summary is in the Appendix number 13.



### **Personal level**

- Spirituality is intangible, woven through the organisation
- It is important to connect head and heart
- and to spend time at Holton lee

### **Group level**

- Time was needed since it is not a quick-fix but rather a process and living it out.
- Language was a problem and Christian Spirituality is still a dilemma
- It was important to listen to and respect each other as we dealt with both research “and” development, not just being polite.

### **Organisational level**

- To progress things within the organisation participation and co-operation are needed since structures don't work otherwise since they are made up of people who enliven them
- We are inclusive, treating people with mutuality so all have equal opportunity
- The research process was slow but enabled ownership and growth
- Process is a two way street in reciprocal relationship
- We need to have our own embodied knowing
- Spirituality and love go together and is not “top down” imposing and doing to others
- It is necessary to hold the vision
- As a group we highlighted a fault in the structure and challenged the “system”
- Spirituality happens in relationships particularly if the organisation can provide a conducive environment to facilitate such a quality of life and ethos so it can be “lived”
- Spirituality has more to do with “being”
- Developing workshops will require more exploration about how the Four Aspects interface.
- Spirituality needs a great deal of “awareness-raising” and naming; it is precarious and vulnerable until something is put into place.

## 18) Research Outcomes

Research outcomes and subsequent impacts on the organisation have been highlighted by the co-researchers writing and in their interviews throughout this report.

## 19) Home for the Vision Discussion:

Our discussion on 12 June 2002 on “a home for the vision” was based on three needs and considerations which are numbered below:

- i. how we could now, as an organisation, continue to maintain and monitor vision and ethos which, during the research process, we had named more explicitly.
- ii. Ensure that it was also based on Faith’s papers “5 and 20 year papers” (in Appendix number 2)
- iii. And decide how close we actually were now to the founding vision

The report below emerges from data from both our discussion and 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing and is grouped using the same headings as above:

### *i. How to maintain and monitor the ethos?*

#### *a) 12<sup>th</sup> June discussion summary in box below:*

- Developing the vision requires putting one foot in front of the other along with the Strategic Plan.
- We need to review how we interpret Tom and Faith’s vision to free the oppression of disabled people.
- It is difficult to change how people think.
- The Trustees meet infrequently and may not have the vision but can become informed by the Development Group and Management Groups who can offer the views of the broader constituency.
- In that way all can become a home for the vision which is a big heavy thing which needs lots of help to carry it and a suitable Management Structure thus requiring “deep democracy”.
- There is a difference between theory and practice, that is, between the trustees and staff “experience”.
- We need to find models since this is also a need in society.
- Therefore this research is imperative to this understanding of the vision so it can be articulated in various ways.



- The suggestion is for an annual meeting to help shape the vision and ownership with the trustees, staff and volunteers.
- We also need constant pulse taking , monitoring , communication so that the vision isn't diluted and also adequate induction so new people can catch the vision.

b) 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing on monitoring the vision

*Alan:* In order to monitor the situation and to keep the practice healthy, it will need a Group such as the one at present, together with a person who has the specific responsibility for doing the further development of spirituality at Holton Lee. Such a person would require considerable people skills, the ability to create strong relationships and have an enthusiasm for the Mission and Vision of Holton Lee and the ability to contribute effectively to all Four Aspects of its work. In view of the importance of recognising the significance of Holton Lee's Christian roots, I believe it will be vital that such a person is of the Christian faith, while being aware of and open to spirituality in a broader sense.

*Jeanne:* In thinking about tomorrow with my spirituality hat on I believe we should be encouraged that people have already shown they are interested in this matter, be prepared to take some risks and be sure to continue to offer an open place of exploration to others. This means too that we need to be open to change and to be challenged. This is important. It might be wise for the spirituality group to have an outside consultant or spiritual director to this end.

*Jean:* The key qualities for spirituality praxis are with the understanding that we want to share the inclusiveness of Holton Lee. The integration of different aspects, for people to discover new things, to teach and demonstrate a new social model, with the interaction between art, environment, care and spirituality, recognising that all people are of equal value. We need to pass on our understanding of the ethos now and among new staff who should be made aware of origin and vision. We need more Holton Lee community days where we can share together, learn to appreciate and encourage each other and be able to draw people in so it is jointly owned. We need to have prophetic teaching that will challenge Churches and individuals, encourage visitors through having Open Days, keep our communication open and respect the land. We can monitor and keep the practice healthy by: keeping a spirituality group going to advise and monitor the "co-ordinator" of Faith House and perhaps by now becoming a "pastoral group" that looks after the well being of the Holton Lee Community. Things we still need to do are: to establish a pattern for counselling, with consideration of where, who, supervision and confidentiality. To make sure all who are involved know what is required, although respecting other faiths, we need to establish our Christian roots and make sure they continue. The appointment of a suitable person to Faith House will help these.

## *ii. Researchers comments in response to reading Faith's book and papers*

During the course of this Project I made various different summaries of Faith's writings and shared them with the co-researchers asking for specific comment on them. What

follows below includes both what they have said in the interviews and what they have written themselves and obviously this reflects how we each understand what has been said, lived and written about, over the past ten to twelve years, each from our own perspectives, which also points to the fact that none of us understand the same thing from the same text, again written differently in their own "voices" therefore conveying something different in meaning.

*Jean:* Holton Lee, was based on acceptance of all, and loving concern expressed in hospitality, caring, counselling and spiritual guidance. It was to be the on-going expression of the community, a place of refuge and discovery, a place that was fully accessible, a place where all aspects of life would be experienced, place that would integrate physical, spiritual and emotional aspects of peoples' lives. This would be expressed through caring, art work, environmental appreciation and spiritual awareness and so enable people to discover a fuller life.

*Alan:* The community was known as a place of refuge and spiritual, emotional and sometimes also physical healing. The unconditional love of God for all was the motivational force in their communal and societal life and there came with it a strong desire that people should be free to become the persons they were intended to be. During future years of contact with the Post Green Community at many camps and on other occasions, I became thrilled with the authenticity of their Christian teaching which was often radical, had spiritual power but was also practical, based upon experience, and had been tested in their living and working together and came not from an isolated community, but one earthed in society. It was from this background that came the founding vision for Holton Lee as a short-term residential centre, with its mission statement as indicated above. It was a privilege to be in close contact with the Post Green Community as the vision for Holton Lee became clearer and they got to grips with the practicalities of planning, fund raising and promotional activities ...

'Equal opportunities' required of Holton Lee as employers needed to be taken into account. The whole process of making the residential centre a reality created enormous pressure on the community life and interrelationships within Post Green Community and necessitated considerable effort and real sacrifice in order to do so. The vision had to be reviewed from time to time, but the heart of it was never lost.

*Jeanne:* as part of this research I have been reading again Faith's papers on "Five and Twenty years on at Holton Lee". I am surprised again at how insightful her thoughts are, how close to what is being put into place, and also surprised at how we are far from achieving her goals within the time frame she gives. Faith wrote them in 1996 and now eight years on we are barely into achieving her five-year goals. It takes a long time to establish a new work or venture; insuperable difficulties are always happening. What has been sustained and developed is the founding ethos – a place of welcome, of integration, of learning; an extension of the vision that brought the Post Green Community into being. This has made me think again of the power and strength of a truly authentic ethos that is passed on to the others who take it up. It has in its inception to be real, felt, more than words. It continues to be 'felt'. A reading of the Barn's guest book is a witness to this. Here is one answer to the question: 'How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis.' Is that it has to be there to start with, within the very foundations. Establishing and embedding follows from that.



### *iii. How close are we to the founding vision?*

The co-researchers, in their 2<sup>nd</sup> person writing and interviews have commented on how close they perceive we are to the founding vision as indicated below. Tony, in particular, had considerable input and opinion which I have précised rather than “interpreted”.

*Tony:* “ the founding vision must have been stored somewhere in my subconscious ... The ‘founding vision paper’ was one of a collection of writings produced by Faith Lees, who I never met but feel a strong sense of her presence ... Recently I saw some video footage from 10 years ago, the speaker said. ‘ ... this has come out of a great vision, come out of the generosity, prayer and faith of Sir Thomas and Lady Faith Lees ... how appropriate it is that your name is Faith ...’ ... the notion wrapped up in the ‘founding vision’ and four aspects was compelling to me, as an artist, disabled person, in the environment and in personal growth and spirituality ... The inclusion of religion as part of the ‘founding vision’ was the most intangible part of the ‘big picture’ when I first accepted the role as Director. I had spent time with Sir Thomas, his family, Carolyn Reinhart and Gerry O’Meara ... I felt the honesty and generosity of spirit did much to quell my fear of religion, dogma and ritual. The notion of service to others, the genuine wish to include rather than to segregate was appealing and the practical aspects of the ‘founding vision’ gave me confidence. I saw my job clearly to build the vision, though not by following rigorously Faith’s papers ... which were rediscovered ... so it came as a surprise that we had achieved many of the things that Faith talked about.”

What has emerged for me is the positive unconditional regard and support we have from those who have responded to the ethos of Holton Lee, our guests and visitors who experience the team work that has developed as a result of working within our aims and ethos, for people not profit, for marginalised and discriminated against people. It takes time to develop deep democracy; you need patience, creativity of thinking, a determination to listen and an acceptance that there are different ways to the same place. We don’t provide a product that our guests and visitors consume, they take part in our lives, join our community. And the feedback they give us is a great reward and confirmation that what we are doing is groundbreaking, important and different to existing provision. This is how we establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within our praxis.

The calm, peace and sense of refuge of Holton Lee is not easy to achieve, for the staff and volunteers it demands discipline, uncompromising standards and a high degree of commitment to service. It can be very difficult to find personnel who can capture the vision and work within and for it, we are a community, a loose collective, and it has been necessary to frame the organisation within a set of policies that are continuously reviewed, this takes time and energy, to respond and change, to meet the demands within the four aspects of the arts, disability, the environment and personal growth/spirituality, to sift and distil what is out there, happening within the world around us and how we can and should respond to it, within our aims, ethos and mission. Simple practical issues like making all our buildings and services as accessible as possible, meeting the individual needs of guests by having open and honest dialogue, through feedback forms and discussing with individuals and organisations about what they need from us and what we need from them, simply allowing people to play an



active part in their own destiny. Our job is not to control them within the constraints of our organisational structure but to enable them within a flexible structure built around our guiding principles.

The paradox is that by working in this way it becomes very difficult to define and categorise Holton Lee, people look and say, "oh! So you are a respite centre for Disabled people" and we have to say well no, the local authority may have defined us as that because they "purchase care" from us. Similarly people say "... so, you're a Retreat centre". Again no, we do act as a retreat for a whole range of people, going on holiday might be termed a "retreat" from the stresses and strains of everyday living, consequently we provide "holiday" accommodation but we are not a holiday and activity centre. Non-disabled people who might come on holiday may say we didn't realise you were 'for' Disabled people, we discover what they really mean is that we have roll-in showers and handrails in bathrooms, buildings are ramped or have level access, and they see Disabled people out and about the estate or Disabled people working within the organisation. We then have to explain that we work to create a fully inclusive environment so all can have as equal an opportunity as possible to enjoy what we work to provide.

Equal access means people can more readily achieve their potential. The idea means that people join in, if they wish, with all that takes place. The garden where we grow vegetables and herbs (on organic principles) are open for people to help in the work that eventually brings food to the table, Disabled people who thought, through onset of impairment that their gardening days were over, may go away planning to re-design their garden with raised beds and planters and a renewed energy to take part in life again, children are enlightened and sometimes shocked to realise that chips are first potatoes that grow in the soil, peas grow in pods and taste even more sweet straight from the plant, they see birds, animals and reptiles and the interaction of nature in microcosm.

People make art for the first time since leaving school, they see and discuss art because at Holton Lee Art is in the environment, its being created and exhibited, it informs our lives and brings joy, taps into our emotions, our spirituality, our growth into what we are, or are working to be. These and many other examples illustrate what we do and how difficult it becomes to try to present Holton Lee in clear marketing terms. People also say oh, you're Christians, as if that describes us, the fact is that we were founded on Christian principles, but Christians, Buddhists, Atheist's and Agnostics all manage to work together within our self-regulated system. Consequently we hope all will feel welcome within our ethos based as it is on Christian principles.

## **20) Job Description Discussion and Development**

Another developmental task which followed on as a result of the Policy was to discuss if we needed someone in a full time post for the Spirituality and Personal Growth Aspect. As you will have read in the interviews and discourse, everyone has agreed that it is necessary as it also now recognised as a necessity in each of the Aspect Groups. Based on the research data, Sam Field's consultation report and our own Policy, in 2002, I wrote an initial draft idea for what might be required. We have been discussing and progressing this in the Spirituality Group as co-researchers and will soon have a

final Person Specification and Job Description which is what potential funders of the post will require in the first instance. The first draft was written in May 2002 and further drafts were written in 2003. (It is included in the Appendix number 14)

## **21) Interactive Policy Discussion and Development of the Four Aspects Autumn 2002**

As stated earlier, as a result of writing the statement and policy for the Spirituality and Personal Growth Aspect, one of the subsequent developmental tasks of the Spirituality Group and this research project was to progress the idea of developing an “interactive policy” in which all Four Aspects are integrated and mutually informing each other in keeping with the founding vision, “of an integrated centre of excellence.” A Draft drawing emerged in May 2000. It reflects the initial intentions we had just after writing our Personal Growth & Spirituality policy. Then in May 2001 I also produced a draft leaflet in an attempt to integrate some theory about the relevance of each Aspect. In the meantime the other Aspect Groups wrote their own policies and as requested by Tony my intention was to integrate them somehow. However, upon reflection, in March 2002, it seemed to me that it was inappropriate for me to write a policy “on behalf of” the other Aspect Groups and I discussed this with Tony. He agreed with my alternative proposal which was to take the need to the Development Group in May 2002 for it to be progressed as a group rather than by me as Researcher or by the Spirituality Group in isolation from the other groups particularly since the whole emphasis of Holton Lee is not to have separate compartmentalised aspects of life, either in separate departments but rather working together as parts of the whole, enhancing and informing each other within the overall organisation. In fact, as you will have read in the interviews and discourse, some feared that there could be such compartmentalisation particularly due to resource imbalances and pressures or conflicting priorities with staff, funding and finances. We have been using the image of overlapping circles representing each Aspect Group and in the introduction to the discussion I made several suggestions, such as, they could be referred to as a dance or constellation of practices or working as a honeycomb or as part of one tree or an on-going jazz session.

Having included the topic on the formal agenda I then produced a paper to distribute, which was an updated version of the draft mentioned above. It included the addition of a brief summary the Development Group brief. It is included on the next page,

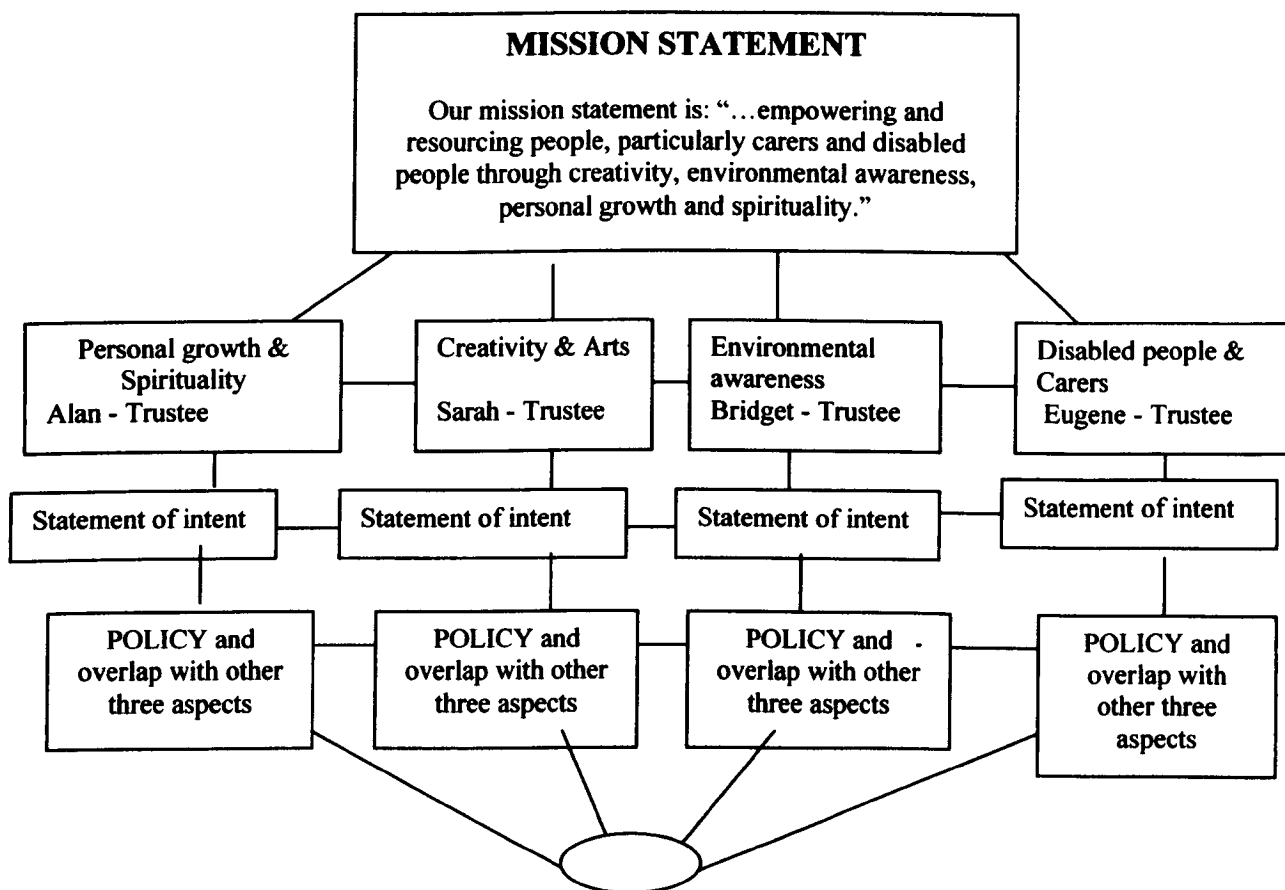
***“Interactive Policy Ideas”***, Diagram 5, which introduced and facilitated the subsequent discussion.

## DRAFT 1 (2000/2002)

The aim is to write an **Interactive Policy** which is based on the founding vision.

In 1993, the late Lady Lees, wrote of our corporate vision: "We expect Holton Lee to be a centre to which people can come to discover new and innovative approaches, whether it be in practical matters or in ways of integrating the spiritual, psychological and physical aspects of their lives. After years of separating out and compartmentalising people, making a division between science and religion, able-bodied and disabled, creative and practical, we believe that Holton Lee will demonstrate a holistic and therefore a healing view of life."

Our vision has developed out of the belief that within each person is the potential for growth and creativity, which when recognised, enables that person to mature and flourish.



The **Development Group** is authorised to take decisions and make recommendations within the areas of: strategy, use of property, PR/Marketing, Human Resources. It aims and objectives are:

- to ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee has a voice both in the structure of the organisation and in building and implementing the vision.
- To ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee is aware of initiatives taken by all Aspect Groups
- To create a structure which will nurture and encourage mutual support for the work of each Aspect Group
- To work towards the integration of the activities of all Aspect Groups in such a way as to enable each Group to realise fully their Statement of Intent.
- To develop the vision of an integrated centre of excellence.

Tony and I did think it would be relatively easy to gather the relevant comments from which a draft policy could be put together. However a big discussion and debate took place which I will summarise briefly below but a more complete text is in the Appendix number 15.

Holton Lee's development is still happening and can't be put into four boxes since we are one holistic thing yet we need structures and principles for clear thinking and legislation. There is no right or wrong answer since we all receive information in ways suitable for us individually, therefore it will always be hard to describe but perhaps that we could aim to be understood like a brand name

The outcome was that each Aspect Group was asked to discuss it in each of their meetings and to bring back the outcomes for December 2002. Now in June 2003 there is still no agreed interactive policy for all Four Aspects. Julie did write a contribution for the Personal Growth/Spirituality Group for the overall Interactive Policy being developed, which is included below.

## **22) Interactive Policy Contribution: Spirituality Group written 2003**

### ***PERSONAL GROWTH & SPIRITUALITY - INTERACTIVE POLICY Draft One, Nov.'02***

We see the importance of encouraging people to make connections across disciplines as well as between the inside and the outside of themselves. This stance forms the basis of our commitment to interfacing with each Aspect group at Holton Lee.

#### ***1.) PG&S and the Arts/Creativity:***

- we recognise that creativity is both life-giving and rooted in the energy of life. As such it involves the inner being in communication and connection with the outside world.
- A piece of art may be a means of expressing something of the artist's own being, but also has the power to connect with the inner nature/spiritual aspect of the observer.

#### ***2.) PG &S and Disability and Carers:***

- issues of respect, rights, justice, inclusion are important to all people but particularly relevant to marginalised groups.
- Sharing of what these issues mean, from the perspective of the different groupings with which we identify ourselves or are identified by others, can enable a deeper mutuality.

#### ***3.) PG &S and the Environmental Aspect:***

- the interaction is rooted in a respect and sense of connectedness to our earthly home and our beginnings
- the degree of our connectedness (or not) will be evidenced by the relationship we have in practice with the land and with other creatures.
- The natural world, as an expression of the greater whole and energy of life, also has the power to connect us with the life within us.

E.g. analogies from the Seasons of cycles of life, death, new birth.



The relationship of Spirituality to the other Aspects is explored more fully in Chapter Six.

### **23) Identifying Research Impacts and Gaps - what if we hadn't had the research and what about tomorrow?**

Obviously, based on the extensive research process and data, it was important to decide and then record what outcomes and affect the research and development process "actually" had on the organisation. I have included key points made in interview comments and second person writing below.

*Tony said: We would be much weaker since we would still be kicking on two instead of four cylinders, since we wouldn't be building on the vision. The trustees and staff wouldn't be as good, so we are more authentic now and more effective and genuinely sensitive to the four aspects. The structure and aspect groups and management are all drawing so much closer than before with regard to how the organisation works. There are now a number of outside people who feel they belong as members and who are suddenly getting much stronger since they are able to be much more clear about what the organisation is about. We still have barriers to overcome both with regard to Christianity and disability, so we are not being seen as a ghetto. Both have a stigma and our literature shouldn't put people off. Yet we need to know with Christianity where we start from and what do we base it on, what principles? Do we need to call it "Christian Spirituality?" or just spirituality, since although we have very clear understandings, the way we present art, not as an art gallery, or the land and environment? Still we don't know how people will feel when they get here and it's the same with spirituality, which is very subtle in itself. Then when people actually ask why does that happen like that you can say this is an example of our Christian spirituality in action. And that is what it means, but it is not a dogma or like following the law. It is a notion of subversity and part of our monitoring is also about looking back at where we came from with a strong spirituality going on and make that happen.*

*Alan said that, basically, if we hadn't had the research as we developed the whole of Holton Lee it would have become more business like with more emphasis on the business and promotional side and money side, with more emphasis on function and more clinical in a sense. Some people's personal outlooks have changed and so they wouldn't have valued it as much. He wrote that he was of the opinion that over a period of time, the ethos of Holton Lee would have become frayed at the edges, until it may have finally become unrecognisable. The Mission and Vision statements would probably have remained, but would have lacked muscle and flesh – lightweight in practice and gradually being eroded by the "necessary" rather than acting as a motivating force. Spirituality would have remained at Holton Lee, but with little recognition and relatively dormant. Personal growth for a number involved at Holton Lee would not have taken place.*

## *The Tomorrow – living the vision*

After the research project is completed Holton Lee will continue on living the story and vision into its *Tomorrow*. The interview and second person writing data has emphasised key points for on-going consideration.

*Tony* said that we still need to ensure that the Four Aspects can work in harmony especially re finances. The tomorrow will be the defining and refining of the four aspects, continuing the journey we are already embarked upon.

The arts will continue to foster the need for self-expression, art touches all aspects of life, art will be of the environment, it may enhance personal growth and understanding, it can tap into the spirit. The environment will remain a major issue, particularly in keeping a balance in our lives, the simple act of exploring and enjoying the outdoors and the wonder of the natural world with the possibility of tapping into the spiritual parts of the self – giving more access to Disabled people to explore and respond to the freedom of the outdoors, by providing all terrain vehicles or by horse and carriage – creating pathways and viewing platforms, accessible interpretation and education in an inclusive rather than formal way. Creating the potential for personal growth by giving as wide a set of possibilities rather than working within an institutionally bound set of unchanging rules.

Giving space, both inside buildings and outside, for prayer, reflection or meditation, offering help to pray, reflect or meditate. These four fundamental aspects of the arts, disability, the environment, personal growth and spirituality will remain – the personnel will change, (they already have done) and we will remain optimistic that they will be replaced by others who have been touched by the vision or seen the way the organisation works and wish to help.

Our building programme will develop, again within the four aspects. The architecture will be exemplary, reflecting the outside natural world within its structures. It will lift the spirit to see and to live and work within, buildings will be fully accessible harnessing new technology to give equal access. There will be no segregated services. Art will be created alongside the development of the architecture to work with the structures, art and architecture in harmony, accessible, fit for purpose and to environmental principles, maximising natural resources and minimising waste.

Disabled people will still face discrimination, disadvantage and oppression; even with legislation and the Disability rights commission and we will continue to challenge that injustice. People will come for renewal and not worry that we still cannot quite define ourselves and our service adequately.

*Jean* said that we need to get someone in to do the job for us, hosting and running and booking workshops, with backup from the Advisory group that we need to encourage “community at Holton Lee” and have an organised basis for retreats, counselling and spiritual direction. She wrote that workshops on personal growth are not available yet, since there have been no premises but the opening of Faith House will address this problem. Personnel to run workshops, quiet days, retreats is needed and a co-ordinator to oversee this work. We need to write a job description for the co-ordinator and raise money and then advertise the post. Counselling and retreat giving still need a private place and we need to check suitable people as counsellors and retreat givers and to set aside a counselling room. We offer retreats but we still need better facilities and a list of spiritual guides and to update and refurbish Ashtree Cottage.



*Julie* said that there is still little structure for Personnel Management; a big imbalance with regard to the environment and spirituality and that writing and presenting courses about spirituality, need to be decided how we can go about that, and particularly need much more exploration on the integration and interface of spirituality with the other aspects. She said there is no way of touching into the overlap of these Four Aspects and that maybe we need to provide something for guests to share, which is a huge area and to decide if we are going to step into it or not. We still need a spirituality vision holding group of two-three people.

*Jeanne* said that there is still a slight concern for the whole area of communication which we work hard at with the new structure and people feel more involved in the decision making process. But it seems some of the bigger decisions are not communicated. She wondered what working models might be around to enable better communication with so many groups, aspects and levels of management? Another area is to learn how to integrate people who don't have disabilities with those that do and this is important since it has to do with the integration we speak about overall.

## **24) Writing and Reading this Report**

As stated previously, writing up our report remained an essential and totally integral part of the whole research process. In fact, it is critical to "make sense" of why we bothered, to represent what we did in order to find a way to make sense of what happened, in a way that all the stakeholders can understand and find some use from it at varying levels, particularly for the sake of *The Tomorrow* at Holton Lee with its future generations. Our research method included a great deal of reflection and reflexivity. It was not neutral or disinterested. We want to represent what we did learn and what did emerge, clearly and accurately, particularly since spirituality has socio-political concerns for justice and peace, the inclusion of all people, including "the other" and oppressed people and groups which now includes the earth.

In Chapter Four I pointed out that we were able to burrow more deeply as a small organisation, able then to extrapolate and live out emerging theory both at personal and corporate levels. During the process of assembling this report I have found the concepts put forward by Ely et al, very helpful as summarized below, basically reminding myself that I was a "bricoleur" working away trying to assemble all the relevant data in an attempt to try and tell the Holton Lee story. Each researcher structures the research project by using to a large extent whatever is called for during the emergent process of data collection, data analysis and the construction of the final document." "Each of us is aware of herself as the carpenter of her own personal, continually evolving theoretical constructs. Like the process of bricoleurs, our qualitative works, as well as our lives, are

products that we ourselves build from materials that we find most appropriate to what we believe.” Insights surface and take shape as we try to understand what we have penetrated by being there, listening, writing, thinking, interpreting carefully and thoughtfully. They suggest that we shouldn’t “... be afraid to create from your data” but instead think about ways to bring out its life and drama. The “*Researcher-as-bricoleur theorist*” fashions the interpretative framework that will best suit the needs of their study which may mean making selections from a vast storehouse of existing theory or perhaps devising new theory of one’s own. It may include relating theory to theory in a manner that best helps to interpret one’s findings among the various perspectives that compose for us circles within circles of theory. The understanding is that, “Theory is not more important than the ground”; it is not levels but rather a type of thinking which helps us to get our bearings on where we are in the world of academic theory. Ely et al believe that perhaps it is only at the end of the project that the researcher can be sure of the final shape of the clustering, even though they began with certain major theoretical guides since Qualitative Action Research has an eclectic and pragmatic nature. The product of the bricoleur’s labour is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis and the way theories are nested is contingent on their context. Transactional theory falls within the general tradition of reader-response and in philosophy theory is proposed as a way of knowing, however, “Within the human services professions, interpretative frameworks are very much a bricolage with the various components borrowed and adapted as fits the needs of a particular research project.” (Ely, 2001:230-232)

## 7. An Overview of Outcomes of the Research in the Organisation

i. An overview of outcomes particularly considering those involved at Holton Lee is highlighted in the points below:

**An overview of outcomes of research: we have been considering oppression and marginalization with:**

1. Disabled people
2. and other minority and oppressed groups
3. the environment and our global home
4. our own structure which was hierarchical and now flat
5. spirituality as a subject which points out oppression of all minority groups and itself is still marginalized by theology?
6. participative action research has raised concerns for domination and oppression
7. considering the need for transformation
8. recognising that both oppressor and oppressed must move and change, viewing not with “double vision” and not the “arrogant eye” but with the “loving eye”
9. deciding to work within the system or paradigm to change it or creating a new system and paradigm?
10. Therefore we researched as a group
11. reflected individually and as a group on the process, findings, way forward to the next cycle, theory and application
12. wrote as a group
13. some read the report
14. I created diagrams to use as visual representation of some of the emerging theory which helps with “writing up” and giving a more accessible representation
15. I needed to create/write theory about spirituality for the sake of the organisation’s current practice as well as for its future understanding, based on the founding vision, and it is now generalisable
16. therefore this writing up may challenge traditional academia
17. may challenge contemporary spirituality understanding and praxis
18. may challenge others working in spirituality in the workplace/organisation
19. may challenge those within our organisation
20. may challenge research methods
21. we experienced transformation at personal and organisational levels as we moved through the stages of the cycles outlined
22. I have not been a single researcher but working in PAR with a group – who also wrote and spoke in their own voices
23. the outcomes are “owned” by the research group
24. Spirituality is socio-political as was the “entire research process.”
25. Even though our research project, knowledge creation and writing period has finished it also remains unfinished and open to continuing dialogue particularly by readers in our “semantic picnic” and others who continue to live, learn and grow within the context of Holton Lee.
26. all of which has required courage to move ahead and make changes
27. we were able to put some things into place but still is a lot more work to do in implementing our findings.
28. can we be a pocket a group or community which can help to point out the need for change and offer guidelines which can be used to avoid either superficial or “quick-fix” attempts at to live out spirituality

Figure 9 – overview of research outcomes

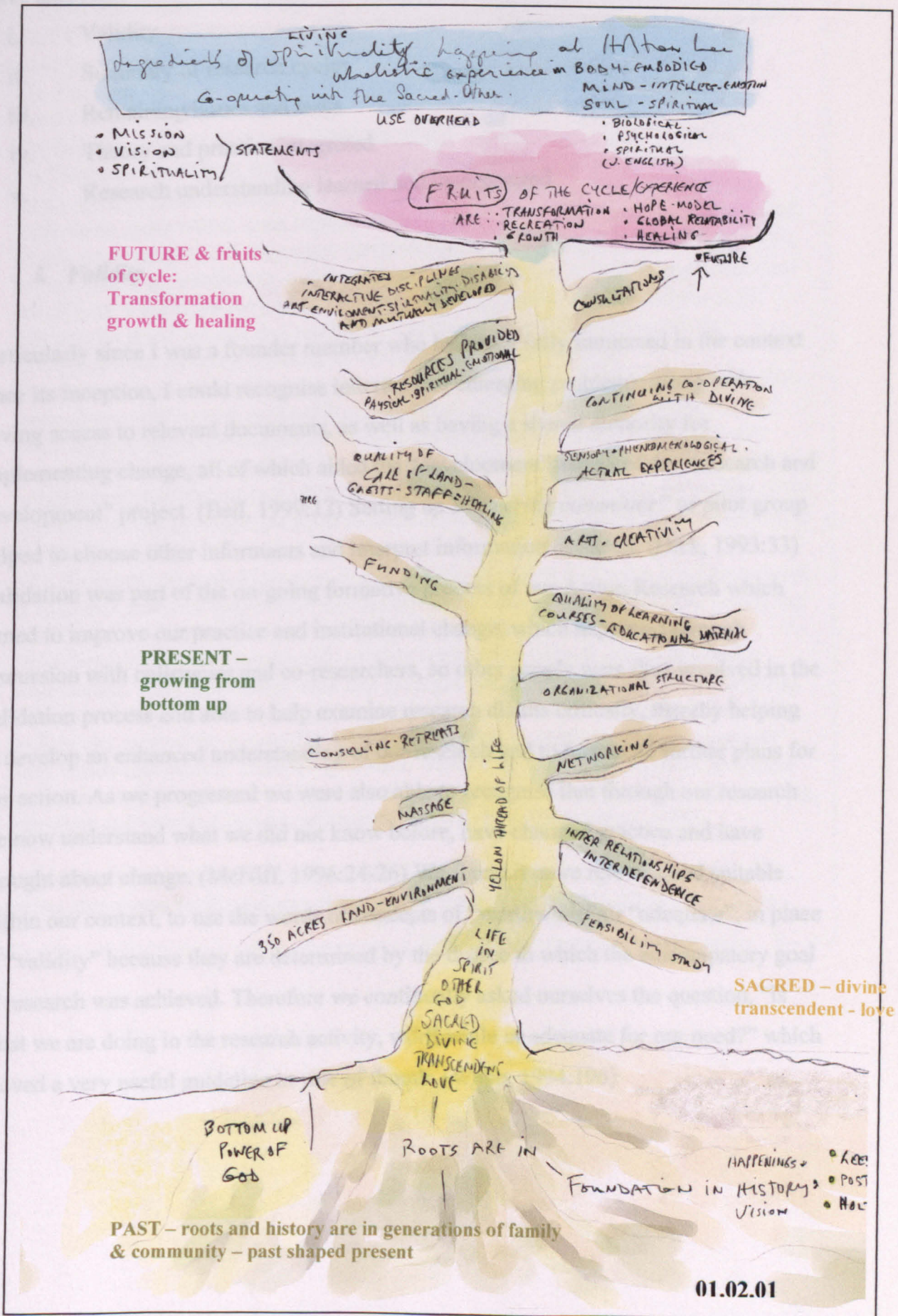


ii. Two of my initial research trees A3 size were framed and hung in the Tree Art Exhibition in Faith House for two months at the beginning of this year. Tony decided that they were themselves works of art and having them visually present gave people visiting Faith House the opportunity to become aware of the research taking place, to gain some understanding, be able to ask questions and generally the idea for the research was disseminated more broadly in this manner. One is on page 85 and the other is on the next page, diagram 6, highlighting the idea of the past, present and future. “*Research Tree Drawing 2*”

# RESEARCH TREE 2

## LIVING SPIRITUALITY – holistic experience

6



## 8. Summary Points about our Research Process

I have addressed the five points listed below:

- i. Validity
- ii. Summary of research cycles
- iii. Remaining issues and tasks
- iv. Theory and practice integrated
- v. Research understanding learned and incorporated

### *i. Validity*

Particularly since I was a founder member who had been fully immersed in the context since its inception, I could recognise inherent and emerging problems, along with having access to relevant documents, as well as having a shared authority for implementing change, all of which aided the “development” aspect of our “research and development” project. (Bell, 1999:12) Setting up a “*steering committee*” or pilot group helped to choose other informants and interpret information obtained. (Dick, 1993:33) Validation was part of the on-going formative process of our Action Research which aimed to improve our practice and institutional change, which happened through discussion with colleagues and co-researchers, so other people were thus involved in the validation process and able to help examine research claims critically, thereby helping to develop an enhanced understanding of our research and to formulate further plans for our action. As we progressed we were also able to recognise that through our research we now understand what we did not know before, have changed practice and have brought about change. (McNiff, 1996:24-26) We found it more relevant and suitable within our context, to use the words or concepts of “worthwhile” or “adequate”, in place of “validity” because they are determined by the degree to which the emancipatory goal of research was achieved. Therefore we continually asked ourselves the question, “is what we are doing in the research activity, worthwhile or adequate for our need?” which proved a very useful guideline or rule of thumb. (Webb, 1994:196)

The research journey was cyclical and non-linear, as we engaged in deep learning, experienced transformation, change and growth, individually and organisationally. The various frameworks below were each helpful “as” we completed the cycles and didn’t miss out the middle stages, otherwise we were in danger of going around in circles.

- The **Pastoral Cycle** is used by those involved with Liberation Theology and described in Chapter Seven
- The **Learning Cycle** facilitates deep learning.
- The **Discernment Cycle** is often done in the context of on-going prayer.
- There are two **Action Research Cycles** operating in parallel. The second is the “**reflection cycle** which is an action research cycle about the action research cycle”, where we evaluate how the action research project itself is going, identifying what we are learning, continually inquiring how each of the steps were being conducted and if they were consistent with each other, so they could shape and inform the subsequent steps we decided on. In the dynamic of this reflection cycle we incorporate the learning process, in fact, learning about learning.
- The three phases of the **Hermeneutical Circle**, as an approach to study spirituality, mutually condition and re-condition each other and include: a description of the phenomenon under investigation, critical analysis and theological criticism and constructive interpretation with appropriation that is transformative of the subject, enlightenment of the current situation and a contribution to the understanding of the spiritual life today. Appropriation means transformational actualisation of meaning. (Schneiders, 1994)
- The **Heuristic approach** has non-linear phases; therefore it is not a rigid framework. It includes: *Initial engagement*: a process of inner searching; *immersion*: living the questions; *incubation*: unconscious processing calling on tacit knowledge; *illumination*: new awareness and insights emerge resulting in a new synthesis; *explication*: fully examining what has emerged and the teasing out of the meaning of inner “felt” discoveries in a process akin to meditation, of indwelling and reflexivity around the research process as a prelude to putting what has “arrived” into words and finally, *creative synthesis*: where one pulls it all together in a form that does justice to it in a tacit and intuitive process, advocating poetry, story telling, drawing and painting during solitude and meditation. (Moustakas, 1990)

Living each of these cycles and approaches has been empowering and liberating; the resulting awareness facilitated our change from the dominant to inclusive paradigm.

Figure 10 – a summary of research cycles



### iii. *Remaining issues and tasks for our research process*

The research group identified several remaining issues and tasks, which still need to be considered in an on-going way and developed particularly now as we extrapolate and shape theory.

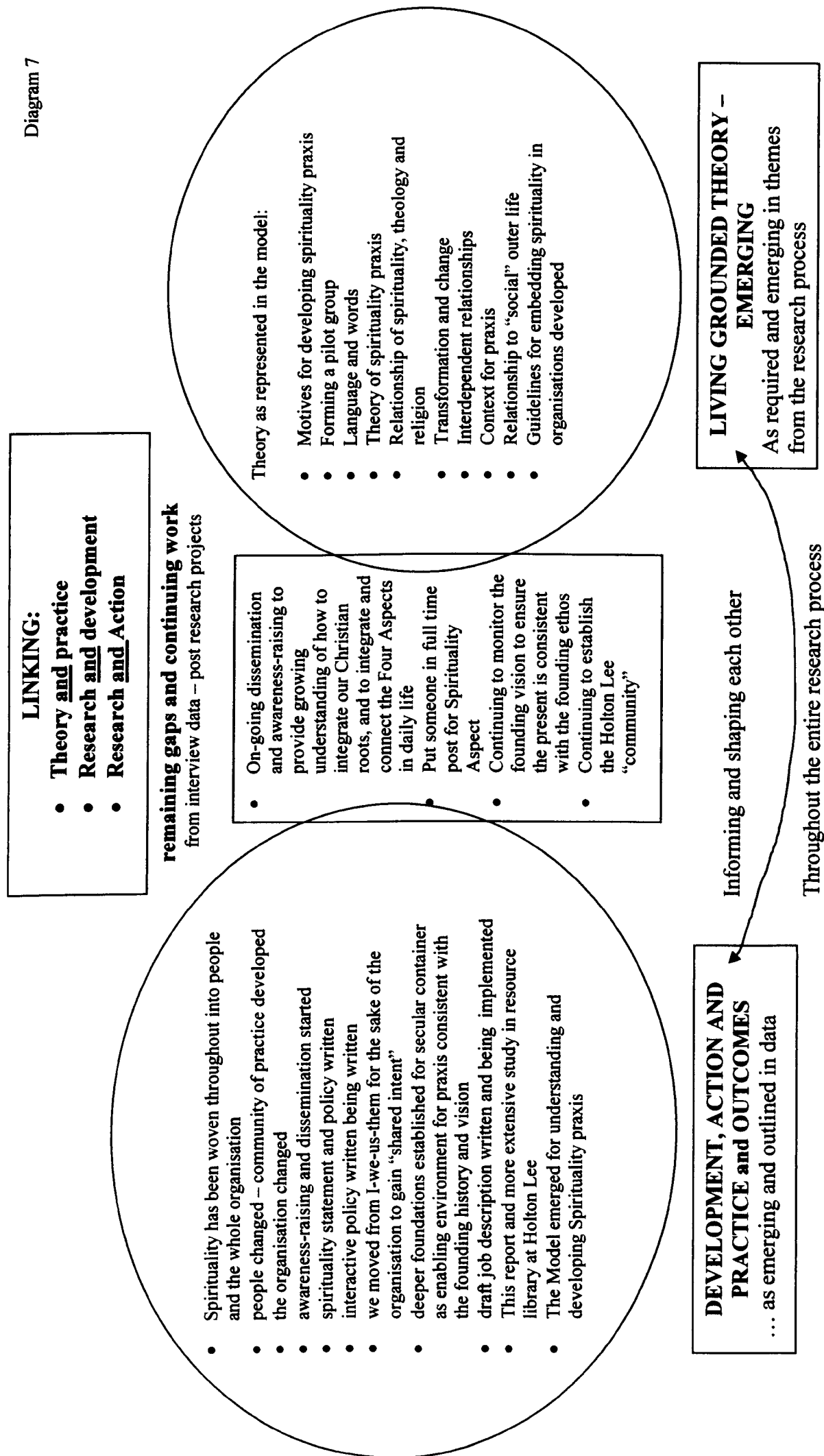
1. the need to overcome fears and barriers, which people both within and those visiting the organisation, feel both towards “disability” and “Christian spirituality”.
2. we need to develop further understanding about what “inclusivity” means in our organisation with regard to spirituality praxis, that is, would we allow everybody and anybody to stay or hold events?
3. the question still remains as to whether we need or want to have a corporate spiritual director who could visit regularly and help by offering objective oversight.
4. we need now to develop and put on workshops on the subject of spirituality.
5. we need to write a job description, find funding and then recruit someone, to continue to develop the Spirituality/Personal Growth Aspect, who has a “heart and feel” for Holton Lee and its vision.
6. we also need to integrate the four Aspects more thoroughly and to write an “interactive policy” which will include an understanding of their mutual interaction.

This is all necessary in order to put adequate understanding in place for the future of the organisation, which will continue to be developed after our project is completed.

### iv. *Theory and practice integrated*

Diagram 7 on the next page, “*Linking*” gives a summary of our practice and theory outcomes.





In conclusion I will highlight “key theoretical understanding” about what we learned about research itself, during our research process.

While studying spirituality in the MA I had personally experienced the reality that it is difficult to maintain a balance between critical distance and participative engagement with the subject and so realised that, for me, any further exploration in the field of spirituality would have to continue as I had started it, “... by loving a subject” That is because I had recognised that it is through, “... the importance of love, engagement, participation in the on-going process of understanding ... we begin to know a subject by loving it. Everything else follows from this, including the hard critical work of deepening our understanding of it.” The cost of interpretation then is that we must invest ourselves completely, both imaginatively and critically, because only then will the subject we love yield its secrets in deepened understanding and appreciation. (Burton-Christie, 1994:21-24) But the research was conducted “with” a group of co-researchers, not just with me as a separate researcher.

*Obviously then we had to address and deal with conflict and relationship issues during our three year period.*

We experienced the reality that “research is a relationship” conducted in relationship and through relationship and that personal experience methods inevitably are relationship methods since as researchers we cannot work with participants without sensing the fundamental human connection among us; nor can we create research texts without imagining a relationship to the audience. (Clarkson, web page)

We were in relationships and learning together as a group for the sake of the organisation. Dialectical holistic thinking is a method in which we can learn in order to bring about continuous change and progress, with the aim of overcoming a black and white view of the world, a dualistic view. However, as we have discovered, it does take more time and effort in the short run, requiring co-operation, patience and perseverance, which did at times lead to temporary insecurity because old and familiar cognitive structures had to change. On the other hand it did enable a more grounded and realistic point of view, by facilitating reform and change, where we the learners were not passive

consumers of accumulated knowledge but functioned instead as active producers and reproducers of our knowledge and theory. We experienced the fact that, "... the end result is the by-product of the process" because our process was itself the task and way we got results. In this way our learning was a process as well as an outcome, which has now produced lasting knowledge, for the organisation to use, now and in the future, rather than an accumulation of abstract knowledge, which could easily be forgotten. It was a continuous process grounded in our experience, where meaningful learning was built on existing knowledge and experience. It involved integrated functioning of thinking, feeling, perceiving and behaving. Such holistic thinking and learning involved transactions between us and the environment, particularly because we now appreciate that we shape each other in reciprocal determination. Thus our knowledge was both personal and social because "knowledge is the result of the transaction between social knowledge and personal knowledge." As Kolb states, "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." However, experience without reflection, generalisation, hypothesis formation and testing does not result in learning. In our group process and research journey we took time for rational reflection and so were able to generate a critique of the social milieu in which we operated, that is, our organisational context and wider society and global home. (Zuber-Skerritt, 1994: 54-55, 105-109, 123)

Holton Lee's mission focuses on "empowerment", enabling and liberation. Participatory Action Research also focuses on "inquiry as empowerment". In it the emergent processes of collaboration and dialogue occur, which empower, motivate, increase self-esteem and develop community solidarity. But they often take second place to the methodology of orthodox research of research design, data gathering and data analysis. Participative Action Research must be employed at both the "*rational level*", in order to liberate stifled thoughts and voices, stimulating creativity and developing peoples' analytical and critical capabilities, as well as at the "*emotional level*", where the process is capable of releasing feelings to free up energy for action. Therefore community meetings and events of various kinds are an important part of the research since they can serve to identify issues, reclaim a sense of community, emphasise the potential for "liberation", make sense of information collected, reflect on the progress of the project and help to develop the ability of the community to continue the participative research and developmental process. But this type of "objective" data cannot be obtained through orthodox survey and fieldwork. As we stayed in the "research process" we experienced

how deeply “research and action” are inextricably intertwined in practice especially as we sought to understand spirituality praxis. We learned that our knowledge was gained in action and for action. In this way our genuinely well-informed action was developed and able then to contribute to the transformation of our organisation and community and help us move toward greater effectiveness and justice. Reason writes that through the process of such genuine collaboration people are empowered, particularly through consciousness raising, which means, “a process of self-awareness through collective self-inquiry and reflection.” As agents of change then we had to embrace a genuine commitment to work with the democratic values which were emerging and to honour the wisdom of those people, both in the research group and in the organisation as a whole, which is something which occurs in the dialectical tension of subject/subject relationship.

We were learning how to learn and to research so that we could understand how to embed spirituality praxis within our organisation. Our implicit understanding of the complexity of what was involved was made more clear and named in Torbert’s vision and articulation of Action Inquiry, with the understanding that it addresses the question of how to transform organisations and communities into collaborative, self-reflective communities of inquiry. He argues that they require valid knowledge of four “territories of human experience” which are:

- i. knowledge about the systems own purposes – which is an intuitive or spiritual knowledge of what goals are worthy of pursuit and what demands attention at any point in time and thus also knowledge of when another purpose becomes more important.
- ii. knowledge about its strategy, which is an intellectual or cognitive knowledge of the theories underpinning its choices.
- iii. a knowledge of the behavioural choices open to it, which is essentially practical knowledge, resting in awareness of oneself and on interpersonal skill.
- iv. knowledge of the outside world and empirical knowledge of the consequences and behaviour.

We had been working with these four territories without being able to necessarily name or identify them as such but somehow understood that our research needed to span and integrate these four territories of human experience, so we could discern, see, embrace,

and correct incongruities in among our mission, strategy, operations and outcomes which we were referring to as the need to integrate, *the Then* and *the Now* for the sake of *the Tomorrow*. His understanding named an aspect of our research approach stating that this kind of scientific inquiry needs to be conducted in everyday life because it is concerned with “primary” data encountered “on-line”, “in the midst of perception and action”, and as “consciousness in the midst of action”. (Reason, 1994: 324-339)

For me, therefore, our research process did seem formidable at times because it included “development” as well as “research” and required working in a sustained way with and within a group and organisation, as an Ethnographer, researcher, project development manager, thus wearing various hats. At the same time I was committed to work collaboratively in a self-reflective community of inquiry, in a way which was participative, and thus requiring transformation at various levels as we implicitly worked with the four territories about our system’s purpose, its strategies, behavioural choices and how we related to the outside world. This understanding had emerged because of the research question itself, which required us to consider the past for present and future praxis. We were together as a group for three years. Obviously we had differing opinions, theological stances and understanding as indicated in the research data. Tony thought he might have to, as Director, “referee” the group because of our differences. Several in the group feared we would have great “theological” struggle and debate. However, in the end, we found we were able to work through our differences, as stated in the research data, by valuing, respecting and listening to each other, particularly since we were committed to the research as a necessity for the organisation. We were a “mature” group of people with enough skill amongst ourselves to maintain an open, honest and trusting environment for exploration. We were able to talk through our differences not so that we ended up with “consensus” and a party-line but rather that we were able to take enough time to ensure that what was decided or progressed was in keeping with the founding ethos and vision itself. Our focus therefore was not on what we each wanted but what was true and authentic for Holton Lee and its past, present and future. Our individual agenda, biases, projections and fears were therefore contextualised in this more broad research need and were able to be named and owned as such when they did emerge, particularly as we took time to reflect, discern and not skip out the middle two states of the learning cycle.



**In Chapter Six we will now explore outcomes from our investigation and begin with a summary of our emerging theory and develop it based around the model, which emerged.**

## **Chapter Six:**

### **WHAT THE INVESTIGATION PRODUCED**

In this chapter I will begin with an introduction and then describe the model and its emerging concepts of theory in the order outlined below:

Phase One: Recognise the need and motives

Phase Two: Form a Pilot Group

Phase Four: Theory of spirituality praxis, including application to Holton Lee's Four Aspects

Phase Five: the relationship of theology and spirituality at Holton Lee as Orthopraxis

Phase Eight: an understanding of the Context for Spirituality Praxis within an organisation or workplace, under the headings of:

- i. Introduction
- ii. Contextualising our research concern,
- iii. Living in our contexts with true spirituality,
- iv. Relevant research data
- v. Understanding organisational structure change
  - a. Functioning of an organisation – Coghlan
  - b. Developing spirituality within an organisational context – Critten
  - c. Communities of Practice - Wenger
  - d. Mini societies – Handy
- vi. Context as environment
  - e. An environment of love - Lees
  - f. A conducive environment – Parffrey

I will then briefly describe:

Phase Three: Language and words

Phase Six: Transformation

Phase Seven: Relationships

The "Social" Aspect of the model

And end with a summary.

## Introduction

Having now come to the end of the formal research process we can now, in this Chapter, outline in more depth what was produced and what did emerge. As stated in Chapter One, there were various outcomes at personal and organisational levels, which included learning, change and transformation. We gained new and deeper understanding about how theory and practice continually needed to be integrated throughout the process particularly so that we could have sound theoretical underpinnings for our *Tomorrow* and for others. A most basic, fundamental, essential need and focus in our research process therefore was to be able to gain and integrate “informed theory” with our spirituality practice, which is now understood as “praxis”. This was especially necessary because spirituality has to do with experience and is a new academic field therefore particularly needs solid, valid, grounded and accompanying theory so that both “theory and practice” are integrated and functioning mutually.

This need led us to developing a model with eight stages within a cycle at the heart of which is spirituality praxis lived out in our *inner life, ethic and context* as well as in our *outer life, ethic and context*. The thrust of the research process was to wed and integrate the founding “theology” to the practice of *The Now*, for the sake of *The Tomorrow*. However we did encounter the existing and continuing conflict between the two disciplines and fields of Theology and Spirituality and so had to address that discrepancy throughout which was essential not only because of our stated need not to live a compartmentalised life but instead as one where our Four Aspects are integrated, but also for our transnational global needs and ethics because we are also part of our wider context for praxis. Our emerging, growing and developing understanding was not one of privatised spirituality but rather one of justice, which integrates inner and outer ethics. Thus we became more and more aware of the need to move from the Dominant Mechanistic Paradigm to the Inclusive and Spiritual Paradigm, as individuals and as an organisation. Our findings are not conclusive and obviously more research is needed and more educators/spiritual guides or directors are needed within this new field and minefield, so that we are not simply living out our “ego” translatively, as Wilber cautions but rather that we live in the reality that we are all connected, as part of each other as Quantum physics indicates, within our relationships, organisations and world. (Wilber, 1997)

The theory, which emerged, did so as the fruit of our research process and data and also from the voices and practice of others so that what we can ultimately espouse for Holton Lee at least is authentic and adequate for our foundations and ethos in these confusing times. We needed to know what “a good spiritual life is”. We also needed to learn deeply from the wisdom of others who live out what they say and from the history and wisdom of the disciplines of theology, spirituality, psychology and physics so we weren’t either re-inventing the wheel nor isolated and insular in our thinking with the attendant danger of being considered a cult or inauthentic practice with self-styled thinking. We didn’t want to be defensive or exclusive theoretically, intellectually or in practice and experience. That approach would be the antithesis both of the founding origins of Holton Lee and “spirituality” itself, reflecting more the Dominant patriarchal model, by “telling” people what to do or what we know and being prescriptive, rather than living the reality that we are inter-connected and inter-related as we mutually and participatively learn together. It was in that manner that we obtained our data and our living theory, not analysed, rationalised and rigid but in a bottom-up process, where we stayed in the discerning, reflective learning cycle, not working in an isolated manner as a separate Case Study, Charity and organisation but as one of many who are on the journey together globally, learning from each other.

Schneiders reminds us that motivation for research is to respond to real-life questions such as the search for meaning, a shift particularly due to the fact that previously marginalized and excluded people are now bringing their agenda to the academy, which demands a whole new approach to knowledge with such questions being asked: where it comes from, how it is established, who generates it and what it is for? Thus interdisciplinarity can respond to these concerns more adequately than intellectual inbreeding of the classical academic specialisations. (Schneiders, 2000) The resultant dynamic of our reflection cycle combined with the action research cycle was the incorporation of our learning process. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001:19, 29) Reason and Bradbury suggest that the purpose of inquiry is the flourishing of the human life of persons, communities and the more-than-human world of which they are a part. It was our on-going need to create necessary knowledge so we could disseminate it within the organisation recognising too that all “reflective theory” refers to knowledge, which is an aspect of action. In fact the concept of action actually includes the “development of theory” which can then illumine and guide our action and provide it with meaning. Our tacit knowledge as “embodied know-how” became the foundation of our subsequent

cognitive action, with engaged practice, which joined facts and values in a participatory mode of understanding, obtained from within our social situation, groups and institution. Thus our knowing emerged in the “process of living” since our inquiry was approached with critical skills and the knowledge creating process itself, since we were seeking to understand from within, by participating in the known; therefore our account may provide some perspective on what is universal. Through such participation our knowing was not just an academic pursuit but the result of everyday acting in relationship and creating meaning in our lives, empowering us at a deeper levels, producing knowledge and action, thus enabling us to see through various ways in which powerful groups in society tend to monopolise the production and use of knowledge on their own behalf which is especially important as we consider disability. Thus our participation included consciousness-raising and was itself an educative imperative, helping to educate those who were involved to develop their capacity for individual and collective inquiry. Such pedagogy of the oppressed will continue within the organisation to engage those in positions of power, so we can share power “with” others rather than power over or under. In this way we will continue to find ways to liberate ourselves from the Western worldview not only in relation to other humans but with the more than human world. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001)

During our research we tried to understand how to embody spirituality within individuals, groups, our organisation and society, in a non-linear on-going cycle of transformation, which led to embodied knowing. As Hughes pointed out, we recognised that our “Faith does not change the external world, but it changes the way we perceive it, and it is from a change in our perception that external change happens.” Such understanding means knowing but a knowing that is not based solely on observation, inner reasoning, logical deduction or the assurance of other people, but with an inner sensing, more like an intuition, which we cannot create or manufacture or force ourselves into. All we can do is be still and discover the gift within ourselves. This understanding is different than the English understanding of the word, which connotes a gullibility and acceptance without proof. (Hughes, 1993)

Delving deeply and extrapolating theory, required a great deal of time for reflection and discussion of emerging theory as we linked it with emerging data, on-line and on-the-run in our real context, in order to perceive the insights, understanding, principles and theory. This was necessary since meaning is not fixed and reality is hard to define since



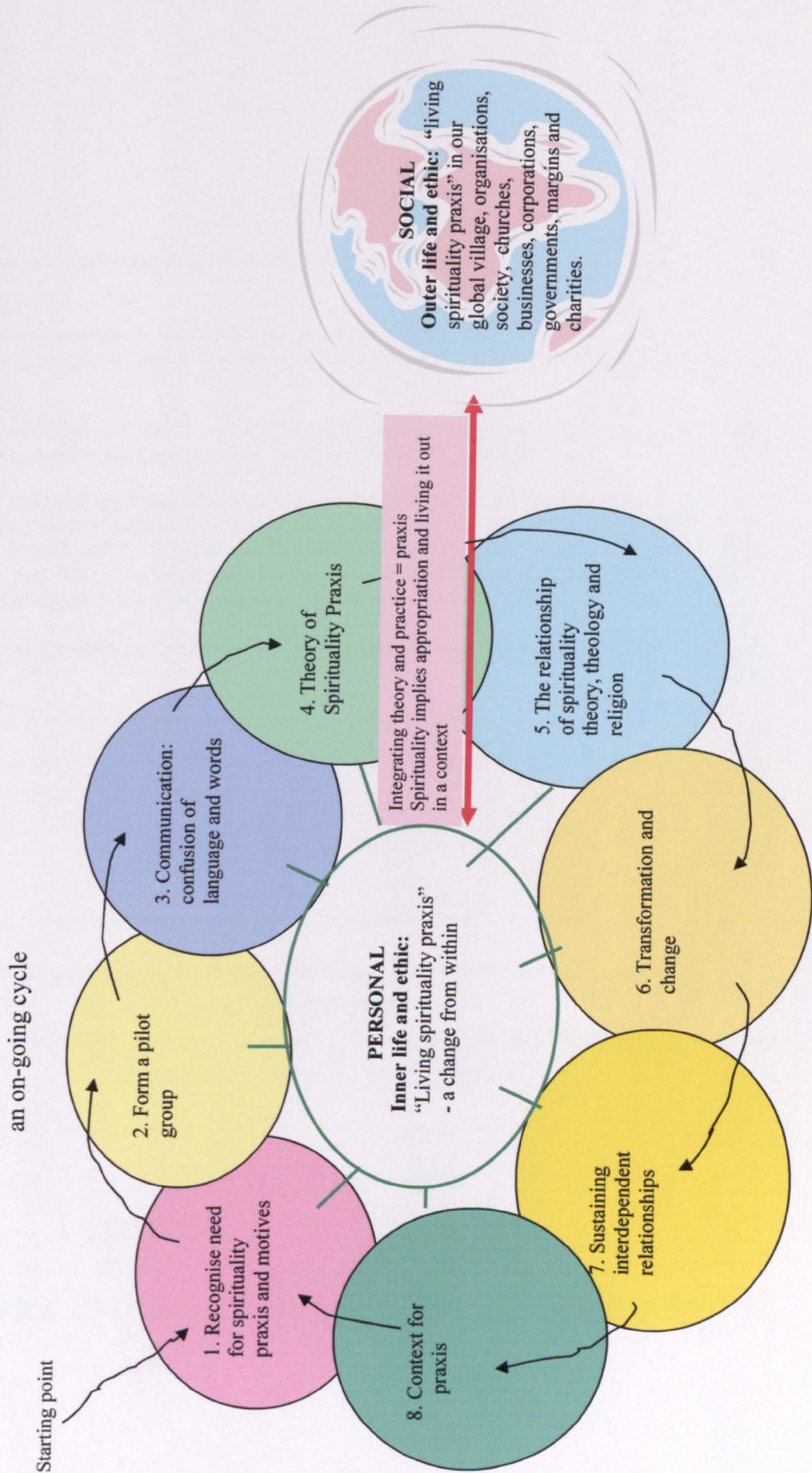
it depends on defining facts and knowledge and so changes, as it is re-defined. Since we cannot differentiate beliefs from facts what is often understood or perceived, as truth, is actually a product of power, so instead, each of us had to understand how we grasped our experience and transformed it into knowledge and behaviour, which happened through self-analysis. Such reflective practice in our research was necessary since we are part of the picture of the world constructed by the research. Because our research was critically evaluated in this Doctoral programme, it helped our organisation to ensure wholeness in the meshing together of our practical and intellectual understanding which now can also help to reassure readers, in the macro audience, of its validity and credibility, as they themselves are now able to appropriate some of its underlying relatable theory about spirituality praxis, (Armsby, 2000:35-42) with the understanding that their additional action and reflection can bring about change of a transformative nature, within their own contexts. (Portwood and Thorne, 2000:67-71) Jeanne, a co-researcher, has recently done extensive research in Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales, with groups living on the margins of the church and has visited Base Communities in East Africa and South America, the outcome of which are two books on spirituality and “New Ways of Being Church”, in 2002 and 2003. During her own research she realised that what we were understanding and struggling with at Holton Lee about spirituality, in our research process is, in fact, happening everywhere and we are part of that globally. She therefore discerned that we are cutting ground and are track too with other groups around the world, experiencing a new way of being church at Holton Lee and stretching boundaries with regard to spirituality.

### **The Model Described**

The model diagram 8 on the next page, “*A Model for understanding and developing spirituality praxis,*” with its phases and cycles, emerged in a chronological and iterative order as we discerned what next needed to be considered and dealt with in the depth of understanding on our journey.

# A MODEL FOR UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING SPIRITUALITY PRAxis ... understood through the lens of praxis

Diagram 8



This model of facilitation describes the theory and our experience of what is involved to enable a widening global view and transformational process to help us to live and appropriate true spirituality. I will use the model to focus our findings with its eight phases forming the sections of this chapter and then include the “social” consideration. Spirituality praxis, as experience, is at the heart of the research model and cycle because what is seen and known is from where one stands and therefore spirituality is understood through the lens of praxis, not from theory, formulas and techniques only but also from what is experienced, affective, heartfelt, lived and learned deeply. Therefore in the model, praxis is at the heart or hub of the wheel and cycle and the spokes link the centre to all the other aspects or phases. *Inner and outer praxis* are connected through integrating sound theory and good practice. The context, environment and atmosphere created within an ethos of love and care is important so that there can be inner and outer integration, conducive to authentic praxis, which determines whether we can “walk the talk” or not. The model can be understood as an on-going cycle since life is on-going and we never stop learning.

The model allows that a group could be working at any phase within it focusing on whatever phase is appropriate to them according to their own contextual needs. What is unique is how this model emerged and was able to be assembled as comprehensive theory, which emerged, from our data interviews, events and iterative cycles, literature review and the inclusion of the wisdom of others in the interdisciplinary fields included. It therefore is a package suitable, relevant and appropriate to lay foundations for our founding vision, theory and ethos and current mission, useful in *The Now* and for *The Tomorrow*, for us as individuals, groups, organisations and society with others. The original thinking therefore, within this Doctoral research project is reflected in how we lived the research and how we made sense of it relevant to our history and also for others but we emphasise that it is not written in “tablets of stone” as prescriptions and techniques, but rather as pointers, suggestions and narrative which emerged from our story, as living and grounded theory.

Certainly the very “qualitative” nature of the research ultimately presented a challenge in terms of “making sense of” continually emerging insights, which connected with each other. As described in Chapter Five our theoretical outcomes, knowledge and concepts emerged from various levels and contexts of knowing and understanding. Representation, conceptualisation, shared knowing and intent were difficult particularly

since we needed, as a group, to have some agreement and consensus on certain basic principles for the sake of the organisation, that is, within our context as a secular charity with Christian roots, so we could disseminate understanding of this difficult field of spirituality with its ongoing confusion with theology. We were, in fact, researching and experiencing as individual persons, group and organisation with several ongoing levels of learning and perception, all happening at the same time. It was therefore helpful to have them identified by Clarkson, as listed below:

- i. *physiological/perceptual* where we know with our senses and bodies
- ii. *affective/emotional* that is our emotions and experience
- iii. *the nomative* which is where we name something using words
- iv. *the normative* which deals with values and norms
- v. *the rational/logical* with its clear, objective and rational conclusions which emerge from empirical data and include our thinking and working with provable facts
- vi. *the theoretical /metaphysical* level deals with metaphors and stories in order to explain and make sense, thus establishing a possible version of truth.
- vii. *the transpersonal/currently inexplicable areas* of human interaction and experience as “spiritual beings” with our soul and the mysterious.

It was helpful to recognise that all these levels or domains co-exist as different layers and are not hierarchical but have a simultaneous wholeness with all levels in which our “knowing” was included and therefore helps us to “make sense” of all these levels of our experience. (Clarkson web paper, 1998) The key outcome of our research has been a deeper realisation that spirituality is not a quick fix but instead involves a journey of change and transformation. The co-researchers often referred to the words “journey” and process and how long it took. We realise that spirituality is still in vogue with a bewildering variety on offer in the smorgasbord available today and that there continues to be much confusion with it being seen as a “slippery eel”. Therefore it continues to need attendant caution because, as we have read, it is perceived by some as a quick-fix

for problems and therefore can end up being understood and practiced in a superficial and trivial manner.

## **Implementing the Model**

The sequence of the model occurred and developed chronologically for us as a cycle, hence the numbering but all the phases overlap and are part of each other.

### **Phase One: Recognise the Need and Motives for “Research and Development” of Spirituality Praxis**

This understanding has been developed and described in various ways in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five.

### **Phase Two: Form a Pilot Group**

The research group and process has been described in depth in Chapter Five and obviously it required that each person be committed to the “research and development” process. Coghlan and Brannick explain how the need for a research process can start with an individual who then ultimately sets up a group and that since there is great need for collaborative relationships great skill is needed, which we seem to have managed. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001) Critten suggests that instead of getting in outside consultants it is preferable the organisation should start where the energy is, with what he termed a “pilot *group*”, which consists of a few individuals who are committed, who are thinking beyond the present moment and who can then surface and codify knowledge which is thus grown out of the group as they move from personal positions to form propositions and action which is appropriate within the organisation. (Critten, 1998)

### **Phase Four: Theory of Spirituality Praxis**

“Praxis” was a difficult concept to understand and apply. The word itself presented misunderstanding and difficulty at the outset because it seemed a trendy but not understandable word, which some thought would only add confusion to those involved and to readers and suggested instead using the word “practice”, which actually has a different meaning and therefore can’t be interchanged. Praxis is defined as, “reflexive



practice informed by theory.” (Zuber-Skerritt, 1994:11) Basically praxis means understanding how theory and practice combine into informed action within a context, which is to “live it” and for Holton Lee that includes an integration of the Four Aspects.

### ***Secular and Spiritual***

Praxis is more than practice since it means theory informing practice, as an interplay between theory and practice, therefore it is important to understand what it means. There are two uses and interpretations of the word, one from a secular point of view and the other from a spiritual perspective. They are explained below.

a.) Theory and understanding of ***Secular praxis*** recognises that praxis does not occur in a vacuum nor does it result from “some kind of thoughtless behaviour” which existed separately from “theory” to which theory could simply be applied, but it has theory embedded within it. In our research process we found ourselves moving from ignorance and habit, as theory began to inform our practice and it then transformed the ways in which our practice was experienced and understood, overall, within the organisation. Our critical examination of our theory and practice then resulted in changes through our integration of contemplative and performative knowledge. Thus our “community of practice” in acquiring “right knowledge and abilities” was able to improve its practice, building on our existing knowledge, generated within our context, as we worked participatively together. Practical application, combined with growing and emerging underpinning knowledge and theory, helped us to develop spirituality praxis in our context. New knowledge emerged as our individual tacit knowledge merged as we reflected and synthesised our experience and understanding which we could then apply in our continuing development. Our practice therefore was not atheoretical but rather a critical evaluation of our action was embodied in praxis. Thus meaning was gained in preference to that acquired from “top down” and imposed theologies, theories, ideologies or hypothetical examples. In this way our “learning” was able to flow back and forth between our practical work and theoretical practice. We did also recognise that we were influenced by the culture, vision and politics within the organisation as well as by existing global theories in our various disciplines or fields. Our Participative Action Research relied on our interactive relationships enabling us to arrive at some sort of mutual understanding and co-operative interpretation. However in our attempts to share our learning and knowing, we increasingly became aware that

language representation and “versions of texts” were/are always open to interpretation by all readers who then are able to create another text, since “language has a provisionality for meaning and there is therefore no end to interpretation.” (Costley, 2000:23-33) This difficulty is explored more in depth in Phase Three.

b.) *Spirituality praxis* includes both being and doing/practice. As reflected in our research data, it is not just arbitrary doing or practice, where “anything goes” but the “spirituality” element to it involves consideration for power, emancipatory and liberatory transformation, addressing the cultural concerns of our day, helping us to know how to “live the good life”. In the here and now of our praxis we can begin our knowledge and formulate our critique and interpretation and so provide norms for human knowledge activity and transformation. Critical theory insists on continual critiquing of praxis to guard against systemic distortion and false ideologies, which reveals distortions of interest, power and knowledge.

- *Orthopraxis* has to do with constitution of freedom.
- *Liberating praxis*, or the praxis of liberating activity, is concerned with how to live the good life and has concern for normative freedom of “what ought to be”. As a result of praxis and emancipatory quests for transformation, fresh interpretations are given, for instance, asking how our Euro-Anglican theology actually contributed to, allowed or resisted, concerns of racism or concerns of emancipatory transformation, which has subsequently led to attention on biblical perspectives of the poor and the oppressed.
- The present *Praxis Paradigm* acknowledges the importance of *relationship, social structures and language* and thus replaces idealism. Thus we have responsibility for how our own particular situation is structured, experienced and constructed for freedom and transformed, away from systems and structures of oppression and destruction. Spirituality is understood through the lens of praxis, with social witness as itself a form of spirituality. For example, the Black church saw the Civil Rights Movement as an intense form of embodying spirituality. In Feminist theology, consciousness-raising, claiming one’s oppression, struggling to speak and write one’s own life are intensely spiritual, as is also true for disabled people who are similarly oppressed; material structural crisis in the world and spiritual crisis are co-present.

- For many theologians Spirituality names the fullness of *Christian praxis* in prayer, action, reflection, liturgy, fellowship and service. The nature of theology is also transformed through praxis, that is, theory/theology occur in a tense relationship to the praxis of Christianity.
- *Practical Theology* addresses the transformation of practices and situations.
- *Political Theology* is *critical praxis*, that is, praxis as foundation and aim. Theological reflection on praxis has resulted in the addition of disciplines of social science, political theory and economics.
- *Liberation Theology, Feminist Theology and Black Theology* all seek a sociology appropriate for the specific situations they are addressing, such as nuclear reality, consumerism, environmental destruction, power, knowledge, patriarchy, racism, critique of prevailing beliefs, attitudes and structures. Theology is understood and defined through praxis, contemporarily, contextually and in concrete time and place, addressing particular ills or problems oriented to practical reason and wisdom with a task of vision of the whole of existence and discernment of particular issues, problems and doctrines.
- *Praxis speaks of a new way of envisioning spirituality and theology*, which is what we have been concerned about and involved with at Holton Lee as part of connecting the founding theological roots with present day spirituality praxis. (Chopp, 1993: 760-764)

Therefore both our process and subject matter required us to know and understand spirituality and accompanying sound theory/theology as we attempted to understand more deeply the experiential interaction between the human and divine which required sensory, intellectual and spiritual knowing since spirituality is understood through the “*lens of praxis*”. Therefore we began our knowledge in the only place we could start it, in the here and now of praxis, formulating our critique, interpretation and transformation and learned more deeply and significantly that praxis signifies intentional social activity and the need for emancipatory transformation, which is a liberating praxis addressing the crucial concerns of our day. Reason and action provide norms for human knowledge, activity and transformation. Thus what is required is a doing, not merely a being or experiencing, orientated toward transformation of historical conditions for the realisation of freedom. Theory occurs in a tense relationship to the praxis of Christianity, in that normative praxis concerning emancipatory transformation entails the use of critical theories in theology.

(Chopp,1993: 760-763). We were trying to understand the things of God with our spiritual, sensory, intellectual and self-knowledge, from which then came insight, which led to foresight as we sought God's mysterious wisdom. (Sheldrake, 1993:547)

In our need to have sound theory, in order to continue to undergird our founding theological roots, we have tried to make on-going connections between theology and spirituality trying not to let them end up in separate corners of our understanding and theory. According to Chopp, theology is also understood and defined through praxis, contemporarily and contextually, in concrete time and place and attempts to address particular ills or problems oriented to practical reason and wisdom and praxis speaks of a new way of envisioning spirituality and theology. O'Murchu suggests that in our spiritual search for meaning, rather than thinking that we have a direct line between me and God, we must understand now that there are a whole web of interconnecting lines and to go beyond our old understanding that God is only about the obviously spiritual or sacred and recognise instead that God often enters our lives through the secular, the mundane and the daily. How we hold all this together in meaningful relation or connection is what the spiritual search is increasingly going to be about for people as their understanding of God shifts. (O'Murchu, 2002:20)

### **An Application to Holton Lee's Four Aspects - Liberating praxis and Orthopraxis**

We continued to seek to understand an authentic spirituality praxis in our own context. But as with any process or cycle concerned with improving a quality of life, we were involved with real issues, with real responsibility in real conditions, attempting to produce solutions, which required change within the organisation, which meant that we had to own our own problems and solutions which implicate us in our global home as well. (Zuber-Skerritt, 1994:48) Spirituality is about love and freedom and the present *praxis paradigm of liberation* has to do with the constitution of freedom, which is what we now understand the "praxis" of Holton Lee to be. This understanding is particularly congruent with our mission and vision.

Through our research process we began to realise in much more depth that where we stood determined what we saw and experienced, which has given us an understanding and constructive interpretation, with the subsequent appropriation of transformative orthopraxis as we sought to live out a quality of life. It has required a paradigm shift for

us to understand and move from an understanding of the spiritual life more in individualistic terms towards one which embraces a wider reality as our spirituality statement also reflects. In this process we seem to have been standing in the gap between “spirituality” and “theology”, studying the experiential interaction between the Human and Divine and found a bridge in the contemporary understanding and practice of Liberation Theology as a spiritual/theological foundation with a domination-free model of relationship and mystical ecological consciousness understood as a future form of religion, thus overcoming a *praxis of exclusion* which is already the hope of self-aware minorities, such as we are at Holton Lee, where we try to say and live, “we together”, in community, with a concern for inequality and injustice, with an integrated inner and outer ethic and understanding of globalisation. (Soelle, 2001) Thus we can embrace, to some degree, the mandate to help and guide others with concern for the future, in religion and education, being able to support the necessary transformation needed as we seek God in the presence of lives in our situation and context, as one of the many groups, as a “outreaching organisation”.

As stated, our intended praxis and corporate vision is to be a centre to which people can come to discover new and innovative approaches, whether it be in practical matters or in ways of integrating the spiritual, psychological and physical aspects of their lives, not separating out and compartmentalising by making a division between science and religion, able-bodied and disabled, creative and practical, thus demonstrating a holistic and a healing view of life and a quality of life which is transformative based on the holistic integration of the Four Aspects which are integral to and inform each other both in practice and theory. Holton Lee’s new infrastructure enables and facilitates such liberatory and empowering daily praxis as summarised in the brief of the “Development Group” below and described in Chapter Five.

The **Development Group** is authorised to take decisions and make recommendations within the areas of: strategy, use of property, PR/Marketing, Human Resources. Its aims and objectives are:

- to ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee has a voice both in the structure of the organisation and in building and implementing the vision.
- To ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee is aware of initiatives taken by all Aspect Groups
- To create a structure which will nurture and encourage mutual support for the work of each Aspect Group
- To work towards the integration of the activities of all Aspect Groups in such a way as to enable each Group to realise fully their Statement of Intent.
- To develop the vision of an integrated centre of excellence.

27.05.02



As outlined in Chapter Five, the research group's contribution to the interactive policy states that:

"We see the importance of encouraging people to make connections across disciplines as well as between the inside and the outside of themselves. This stance forms the basis of our commitment to interfacing with each Aspect group at Holton Lee".

I will now address each of the Four Aspects with a theoretical understanding and application of orthopraxis. Aspects on The Environment, Disability and Art, will each begin with a "quote" from the Personal Growth & Spirituality /Co-researchers' group statement on the interface with each of the other Aspects as described in Chapter Five.



- a) Personal Growth & Spirituality
- b) Spirituality and the Environment
- c) Spirituality and Disability
- d) Spirituality and Art

#### a) Personal Growth & Spirituality

Our understanding of spirituality grew as we moved around the research cycles not on a linear or rational journey but in cycles within cycles of change, growth and transformation at personal, organisational and societal levels. Our deepening understanding and transformation resulted in further development and more informed practice, learning that spirituality "praxis" is socio-political and happens through informed action, in social witness, which also required a paradigm shift because, *Orthopraxis and liberating praxis* has to do with constitution of freedom and liberating activity concerned for "what ought to be" rather than "what is". It acknowledges the importance of relationship, social structures and language and thus replaces idealism, implying that we do have responsibility for how our own particular situation is structured, experienced and constructed for freedom and transformed, away from systems and structures of oppression and destruction. This research project set out to look for answers about how to establish an authentic and healthy "spirituality" praxis with its Four Aspects.

We were highly committed to soundness and authenticity and spent many hours discussing and reflecting as we sought deeper understanding and relevant theory.

Research has to do with “connected knowing”, that is, seeking to understand from within (Reason & Bradbury, 2001:11) and therefore we knew we couldn’t write about something we did not “know”, and such “embodied knowing” meant that we first had learn with our “selves” in an on-going way, with our own bodies, minds and souls, appreciating that wholeness was not linear perfection but rather, the living out of “spirituality” included an interdependence with the self, others, the earth and sacred. Our inquiry into “spirituality” was not an individualistic activity, but instead, as we have seen, encompassed political, social, ecological and interpersonal concerns, “with” others. Where we were standing continued to determine what we had to say through the lens of our praxis. Our long and shared journey was as important as arriving at the destination we set out for since we learned together while navigating various twists and turns in the road. Our mission statement itself required us to look through a wide-angle lens in order to have holistic view of life, not a compartmentalisation of it and so our “participative approach” helped us to see a way forward both in our own context and for others in our global home. Fruits of such a “spirituality of life” are an at-one-ness with self and a mutual love with others, in which we seek full humanity and spiritual empowerment and what we have learned and have written about is from our own experience and integrated perspectives, that is, with a “bottom-up theory”.

Our resultant understanding of spirituality is described on the next page in diagram 9, *“The Basic Model of Inclusivity”*, showing what is involved in moving from the old paradigm to the new suggesting an inclusive spirituality which required a shift from a Dominant paradigm to one of Relational power which requires that both those who are dominant and those who are thus oppressed must change in order to live in a new global community. Spirituality includes a relationship to the environment, disability and the arts. As the “Personal Growth and Spirituality” Aspect title infers, we don’t separate out the “spiritual and human”. A theological understanding of such *Holistic Spirituality* reflects both our founding theology and current understanding of spirituality as explained below.



# THE BASIC MODEL OF INCLUSIVITY

Diagram 9

The old dominant paradigm & worldview is one of power, with its arrogant eye and stare operating within patriarchal and hierarchical structures and dominant relationships living with a disconnected separate independent self

Which results in dualisms and dichotomies of either-or

Consequently a metanoia and paradigm shift is required, to one of relational power and collaboration, shifting from the "I" to the "we", which therefore includes a journey of change and transformation. Both the oppressors and the oppressed must change; each converted to a new relation of mutuality. We are freed from the need either to control or remain submissive.

Therefore "others" are **oppressed**, living in subordinate relationships, marginalized and experience powerlessness as victims, which now includes our "earth home" and natural environment.

(Fisher, 1995) (Manazan, 1996)



## Holistic Spirituality

A “holistic spirituality” respects the psychosomatic or body-spirit unity of the person, since the struggle for personal wholeness is an integral part of the journey to holiness. The body and spirit are closely united, thus to regard the spiritual life holistically is to assert the truth of two central beliefs: *firstly*, the pursuit of holiness is in no way inimical to healthy human growth and *secondly*, those who strive to be religious are not exempt from the human condition so they must like everyone else work out their growth into wholeness in the context of human struggle. Thus those aspiring to be religious persons must continue to invest in their on-going human growth; unless we stay open to expanding as persons able to give and receive love, our quest for religious growth will thwart our cooperation with God in bringing about a universal society of love. Maturity comes gradually, not all at once; so continual growth is essential to religious maturation, therefore a spiritual life not built on solid human development is liable to be superficial and escapist. Since there is belief in the incarnational pervasive presence of God, it appears that the hallmark of holistic spirituality is that it counters dualism, the devaluation of the world of the senses, dichotomization of matter and spirit, the view that material things are tainted with sin or the realm of the divine as nonmaterial. Holistic spirituality believes instead that these separated realities should be united, in contrast to the dualist “either-or” mentality, which sees things as irreconcilable opposites, stressing a complimentary “both-and” attitude that is integrative and inclusive. It opposes pitting the sacred against the secular, individual against social, this world against the next and spiritual against the material.

However, dualistic thinking has already shaped spirituality in various ways: *firstly*, it is equated with the so called life of the soul, the interior life, which is thereby compartmentalised and set in opposition to other inseparable aspects of human life; the development of one’s inner life or spiritual soul is almost exclusively emphasized, with affectivity, sexuality or other aspects of the life of the body seen as irrelevant to spiritual development. *Secondly*, another incompatible dualism is the division between the sacred and secular, and so a spirituality coloured by this dichotomy restricts our encounter with the holy or spiritual dimensions of reality to certain times, places or experience explicitly related to religion. Ordinary experiences of daily life are treated as if devoid of God’s presence and thus are irrelevant to divine encounter and spiritual growth. In contrast holistic spirituality stresses the fact that we live in a divine milieu so every

particle of the created universe is potentially revelatory of God. Some strands of traditional spirituality have no responsible involvement in political and economic matters which for them have no connection to spirituality. In contrast, holistic spirituality requires commitment to work for justice and the use of resources of creation in a way that is ecologically and socially responsible, maintaining that love of God and love of neighbour are inseparable. Any spirituality that values a privatised, vertical love relationship with God at the expense of the communal, horizontal love of neighbour would be inimical to holistic spirituality.

A holistic spirituality is a religious outlook as well as a way of structuring one's life in order to embody religious values, with a religious orientation which wants to know how God is leading and loving in all aspects of life, acknowledging that all aspects of our lives are subjected to the transforming influence of the Spirit, opposing spiritualities that restrict the scope of the spiritual life to one's relationship to God and the condition of one's soul. A holistic spirituality attempts to embrace the totality of our existence, including our relationship with others, our work and the material world, defining our spiritual life as coextensive with life itself, so every human concern is relevant. God's spirit can be encountered in all aspects of life, not merely in explicitly religious activities of prayer and worship. Holistic spirituality links with every aspect of human development, psychological, spiritual, interpersonal and political. As a life structure it addresses the design of our lives, viewing spirituality as a particular way of being in the world, a way of walking as opposed to merely a way in the mind, it is concerned with helping people to embody in a life-style the values they profess verbally. Thus it entails choices and decisions about the way we spend our time, money and resources and issues around work, leisure, prayer, politics, sex and relationships. It is concerned with helping people connect and unify the various aspects of their lives in a responsible and coherent manner.

The theory outlined above is very helpful in providing sound theoretical underpinning to our belief and experience. Life is experienced by many people, at many levels, in various ways, every day, within our "secular" context and yet as the data reflected, they do "experience" something which they can't explain or finds words for, that "something more", and this happens in both environments, that is, within the landscape or within the buildings, as people relate, sharing meals, stories, friendship, care, humour or just being. A holistic spirituality attempts to find an outlook that will integrate peoples' lives



sufficiently to give a sense of increasing wholeness and guide them in fashioning a concrete way of living out their spirituality. Enabling people to forge a more vital link between faith and daily life, a holistic approach to the spiritual life, helps to heal the dichotomies and divisions that have forced so many to be schizophrenic in living out religious beliefs, and helps to overcome this pernicious schizophrenia between soul, body, brain and heart and thus become more whole, which is precisely the vision and mission of Holton Lee. (Au, 1993: 488-491)

Diagram 10 on the next page, *“A Circle of Friendship”*, points out many features and descriptors of our understanding of spirituality. Much of this understanding has been explained in previous chapters so this diagram therefore serves as a visual summary.

- it shows dominant attributes of the Old Paradigm and system
- the resultant dualisms and dichotomies
- and oppression of the weak, marginalized, vulnerable “other”
- In order to move from the old to the new paradigm a shift is needed which can be described in various ways as indicated, in change and transformation.
- The New Paradigm is described as one of inclusion where we are able to live out an evolutionary spirituality in a circle of mutual connectedness and web of relationships. The attributes indicate a way of life which is very different from one of power “over” others to one where we live “with” others.

# A CIRCLE OF FRIENDSHIP

a model of reality with a new worldview and order an evolutionary spirituality which views with the Loving Eye in a circle of mutual connectedness and web-of-relationships – living an “evolutionary spirituality”

## An inclusive companionship paradigm for being in the world.

Living in a circle of companions and web of mutual and inclusive relationships, in true communion, with openness, respect, reciprocity, compassion, interdependence, interconnectedness, interrelationship, listening, love and compassion and co-operation with a passion for right relationship, care, empathy and concern. It is deep, mutual and egalitarian.

None are superior or inferior since are lives are interwoven. We live with integration, both/and, empowering “with” others equally and in solidarity with recognition of “the other” with radical unity and diversity and transformed loving, in democratic and interactive relationships

Friendship in a non-hierarchical web of relations, linked in generative web of communion with each other and rest of creation, in a great web of interbeing, and web of connectedness, which implies shared risk and co-operative evolutionary learning .

Respect for process, synthesis, the holistic, felt, experiential, affective, intuitive, metaphorical and bottom up growth, living in a Co-creative dance of human body/ mind and cosmos

The incomprehensible mystery of divine love is poured out for the sake of the world.

“Out of the circle grows the mighty flowering tree which shelters all the children of one mother and father” (Fisher, 1995)

(Johnson, 1998)

**Oppressors: in the old paradigm of power & worldview with its arrogant eye and stare:**

- Patriarchal system
- Hierarchical dualism & power
- Aggressive social systems - unilateral power
- Power “over” – domination –imperialism
- Mastery – privileged – controlling - competition
- Mainly rationalistic, Linear thinking, analysis, reason and logic, devaluation of world of senses
- Modernist – either/or
- Autonomy, rugged individualism
- Ethos of separation and disconnection
- Independent self, separateness, self-justification

**A Paradigm shift**  
requires us to move and change from “I” to “we” – to a new paradigm of “relational power” and collaboration.  
Through a transformative journey and Psychological revolution

### Results in:

- Dualisms
- Dichotomies
- Extremes
- Either-or
- Separated realities
- Irreconcilable opposites
- Splits

### Oppressed:

- Weak, submissive victims
- oppressed and marginalized, vulnerable as “the other” objects
- Subordinate and powerless
- Disadvantaged
- Subjugated
- Includes the natural environment

*Any spirituality that values a privatised and vertical love relationship with God at the expense of communal horizontal love of neighbour is inimical to holistic spirituality (Au, 1993) A paradigm shift is required so we can embrace a wider reality which is fundamental to authentic spirituality. It is dangerous because the unsettling presence of God is in and proceeds from the world of the poor and those engaged in justice, peace and the integrity of creation, according to theologians O’Murchu and Soelle*

## b) Spirituality and the Environment

### *“Personal Growth & Spirituality and the Environmental Aspect:*

- the interaction is rooted in a respect and sense of connectedness to our earthly home and our beginnings
- the degree of our connectedness (or not) will be evidenced by the relationship we have in practice with the land and with other creatures.
- The natural world, as an expression of the greater whole and energy of life, also has the power to connect us with the life within us. E.g. analogies from the Seasons of cycles of life, death, new birth.”

The environment can inspire us to experience and feel connected with the Divine, which can happen either through its beauty or through our concern for our planet and survival. Theological dualism sets God apart from the universe and humans from the earth separating spirit and matter, separating our sense of self and others, and to the wider world thus they suffer alienation. However, a quantum spirituality worldview and earth-based ecological and integrating spirituality holds a promise of a new worldview which is less fragmented, more holistic and coherent and stresses dynamic relationship. It is concerned with the endless renewing power of creativity within the universe since the Quantum worldview draws personal, spiritual and social into one coherent whole. Earth, God and all human beings are profoundly connected and joined together in an all-encompassing interconnectedness. Johnson believes that we are already living in a paradigm shift but it will take decades to filter through which is too late for our ecological home crisis. However, participatory knowing, formulated scientifically, gives a new approach to theology, with an “I/thou” relationship with nature. God is embodied within the coherent quantum vacuum in dialogue with the world as immanent and accessible to all, in mutually creative dialogue, thus dismantling the theological dualism with this quantum worldview. Such a change does depend on how individuals are in touch with their own experiences and deepest intuitions since our bodies and senses, dulled by modern technology and dualisms, need to be recovered from their alienated existence, which Quantum theory now gives back to us. The Divine is immanent in the sacred whole in which we participate, empowering us in a cosmic web of care and solidarity. (Johnson 1993:18-59)

Through changes brought about by colonization and continuing foreign domination, spirituality has become dichotomised from nature and has assumed an other-worldly perspective, which is abstract and divorced from worldly concerns and many regard



such a relationship as pagan, heathen or backward. However, the effort of oppressed and marginalized peoples to sustain their struggles to transform an increasingly dehumanised society is pushing us to reclaim this earth-based spirituality. The global environmental crisis is also a factor in the effort to recapture what is good in indigenous religions and practices. Tauli-Corpuz suggests that we should persist in developing anew our relationship with the earth, thus the dominator model of society facilitated by the dichotomization of nature and spirit, should be transformed. If we believe that a quantum spirituality and worldview draws the personal, spiritual and social into one coherent whole, where the earth, God and all human beings are profoundly connected and joined in an all-encompassing interconnectedness, then we do need to live out a paradigm shift so we can move from our dualistic understanding of a hierarchical God understood as aloof and separate and instead know God as an indwelling sustaining presence with empowering, personal, active engagement and presence in the word. The Divine is immanent in the sacred whole in which we participate – empowering us in a cosmic web of care and solidarity. (Tauli-Corpuz, 1996:106)

### **A Working Theology**

Our current worldview is that we are individuals with the right to happiness, especially the happiness of the consumer-style “abundant life” and that market ideology has become our way of life, almost our religion, telling us who we are (consumers) and what is the goal of life (making money). “Christianity has been concerned almost exclusively with the salvation of individual human beings (primarily their souls) rather than with the liberation and well-being of the oppressed, including not only oppressed human beings, body and soul (or better spirit) but also the oppressed earth and all its life forms.” We, as post-industrial and urbanised people, are alienated from our own bodies and from the body of the earth. The results then are that we do not love nature or care for two thirds of the world’s people since 20% of us use 80% of the world’s energy. However,

- Post-modern science is telling us that the universe is a whole and all things, living and nonliving, are interrelated and interdependent.
- We must have a working theology, one that can actually function in our personal, professional and public lives.

- One way to test our deeply subconscious beliefs about God and the world that profoundly influence your actions is to examine it. We can undertake a contemplative exercise for the purpose of living with God and for neighbour more appropriately and fully.
- It has to do with a way of doing theology, which begins in experience and ends in a conversion to a new way of being in the world.
- To develop a working theology is not “doing one’s thing” or finding a comfortable view of God, rather it is undergoing the discipline of the examination of conscience for living the spiritual life more deeply and fittingly in one’s own time.
- Then we will live a different life, one that will make the earth healthier and people happier.
- This as the great work of the twenty-first century, because never before have we had to think of everyone and everything all together since we know that if we are to survive and our planet flourish, we will do so as a whole or not at all.  
(McFague, 2001:xi-xiv)

Diagram 11, “*Ecological Reformation and World View*”, on the next page demonstrates that a paradigm shift requires us not to look with a distancing objectifying *arrogant eye* with its predatory stare which sees everything in relations to the self, as “for me” or “against me”. Rather we can see with the *loving eye* where we shift from an “I” to a “we”, living with equality and mutuality and empowerment. We need a new lens for seeing and new vision for humanity and our world, so we can behave differently, having respect for others as “thou” in relationship because our understanding of how to live our spirituality includes our relationship to our selves, each other, the Divine and our earth. The diagram thus summarizes what we have now learned, understood and embodied more deeply in our research process.



INDIVIDUAL MODEL OF HUMAN LIFE

Which arose several hundred years ago and is dangerous

If we look with an *arrogant eye* our knowledge of the world is based on subject-object dualism with its distancing, objectifying, controlling knowledge of the world, seeing nature and subjugated people with a *predatory stare*. It sees everything in relation to the self, as either for “me” or against “me”, is acquisitive and organises everything in reference to itself because it cannot imagine the other is independent. The exploitation is so subtle that the oppressed eventually become willing to conform to the arrogant gaze of the patriarchal eye; all of us in the Western world share this gaze. (McFague, 1993)

The *loving eye* model implies a SHIFT from an “I” to “we” with subject-subjects partnership, equality and mutuality along the love axis not the power axis, which does not hyper separate nor does it fuse. In a SHIFT to mutuality the subjugated are empowered and the privileged listen and give up power “over” others, not simply exchanging places, but rather all are converted from domination/subordination structures to new relationships of mutuality (Ruether, 1998)

The *embodied view* and perspective especially from our needy bodies changes how we see every issue and stresses the basic needs of all life forms including long term care of our planet.

ECOLOGICAL REFORMATION AND WORLDVIEW

ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF HUMAN LIFE

Ecological theology believes that we need a new lens for seeing and a new vision for humanity and our world. We need to develop a new sensitivity so we think differently and therefore behave differently with correct human conduct. An Ecological Theology of embodiment where we decide the nitty gritty decisions on all issues in our personal lives, political, economic, medical, technological, military, educational and family arena.

The loving eye suggests acknowledgement of and respect for others as subject not object. The loving eye doesn't stare but relates to the other more like a “thou” than an “it” as Buber suggests. We always know in relationships with others. The language of relationship includes respect, reciprocity, listening, openness, paying attention, care and concern. (McFague, 1993)



### c) Spirituality and Disability

*“Personal Growth & Spirituality and Disability and Carers:*

- issues of respect, rights, justice, inclusion are important to all people but particularly relevant to marginalized groups. Sharing of what these issues mean, from the perspective of the different groupings with which we identify ourselves or are identified by others, can enable a deeper mutuality.”

Our increasing realisation was that an inclusive spirituality was also socio-political in its praxis with mutuality, respect and full participation, with shared power and voice. Therefore the reformulation of disability as a social oppression is living out a holistic spirituality as we reject a paternalistic patronising approach to social policy and life. Disabilities are socially constructed and so the Social Model of Disability insists on inclusion and therefore has far reaching implications for society as a whole. It also raises unanswered and uncomfortable questions which we are attempting to address at Holton Lee because we are committed to live an inclusive authentic spirituality which has required us to move from the traditional **Medical Model** of an “enlightened guardian model of care” to the **Social Model**. This change happened through a shift and change in our attitudes and policies, followed by the commitment to live them out and not just “talk about” them. We often don’t see our biases and prejudices even though our motives are well intentioned therefore we continue to remain ignorant until the gaps between what we say and what we do/practice, are pointed out and so in error and by default we continue to make “ablest” statements and live within structures which continue to discriminate. Through real and true participation, with disabled people, which includes Tony the director, some Trustees, staff, volunteers and guests, attitudes and structures have gradually been able to change to those with a socio-political and holistic approach which instead focuses on removing social and environmental barriers and structures so that a greater and deeper autonomy results, which is facilitated at many levels and Disabled people are encouraged to speak for themselves and not be excluded as an oppressed minority in our contemporary society.

The two models of disability are depicted and contrasted below.

MEDICAL MODEL OF DISABILITY

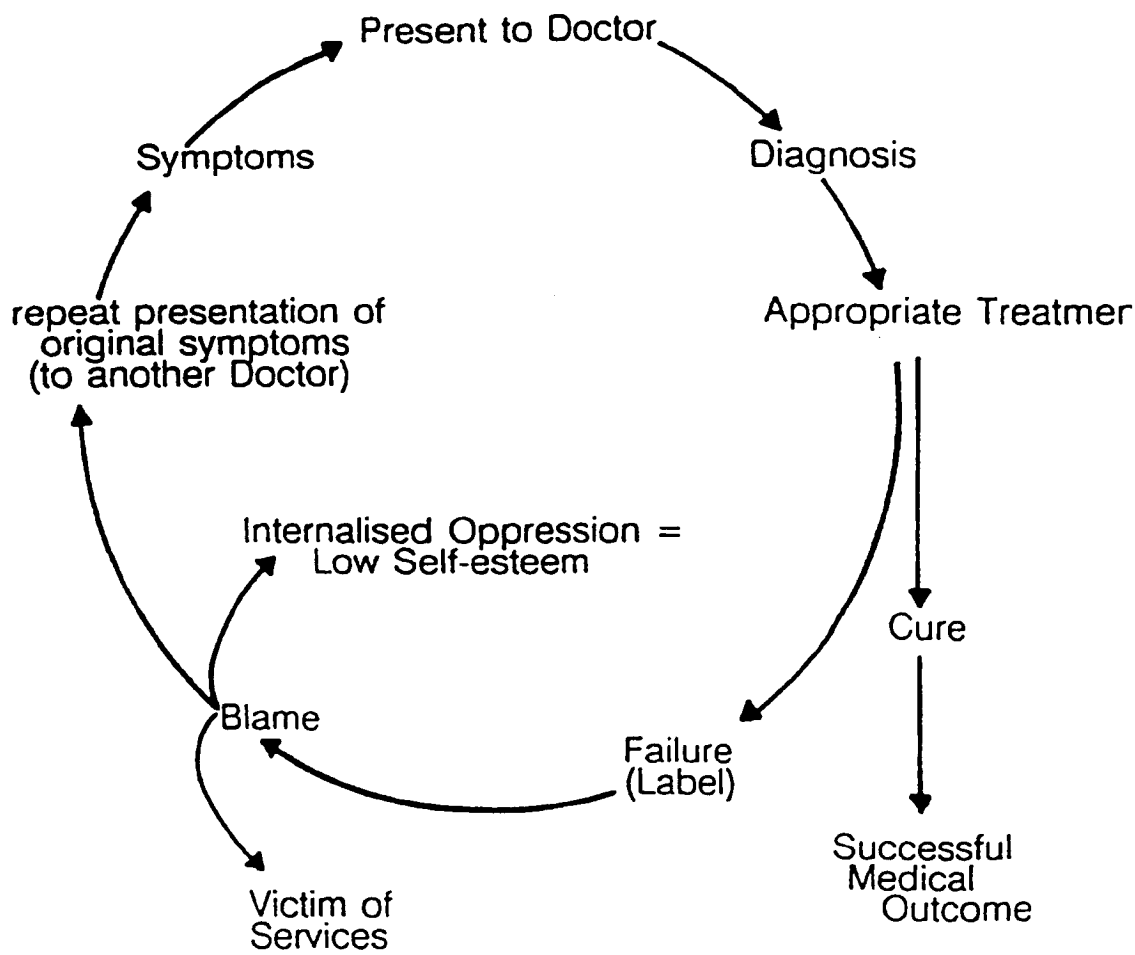
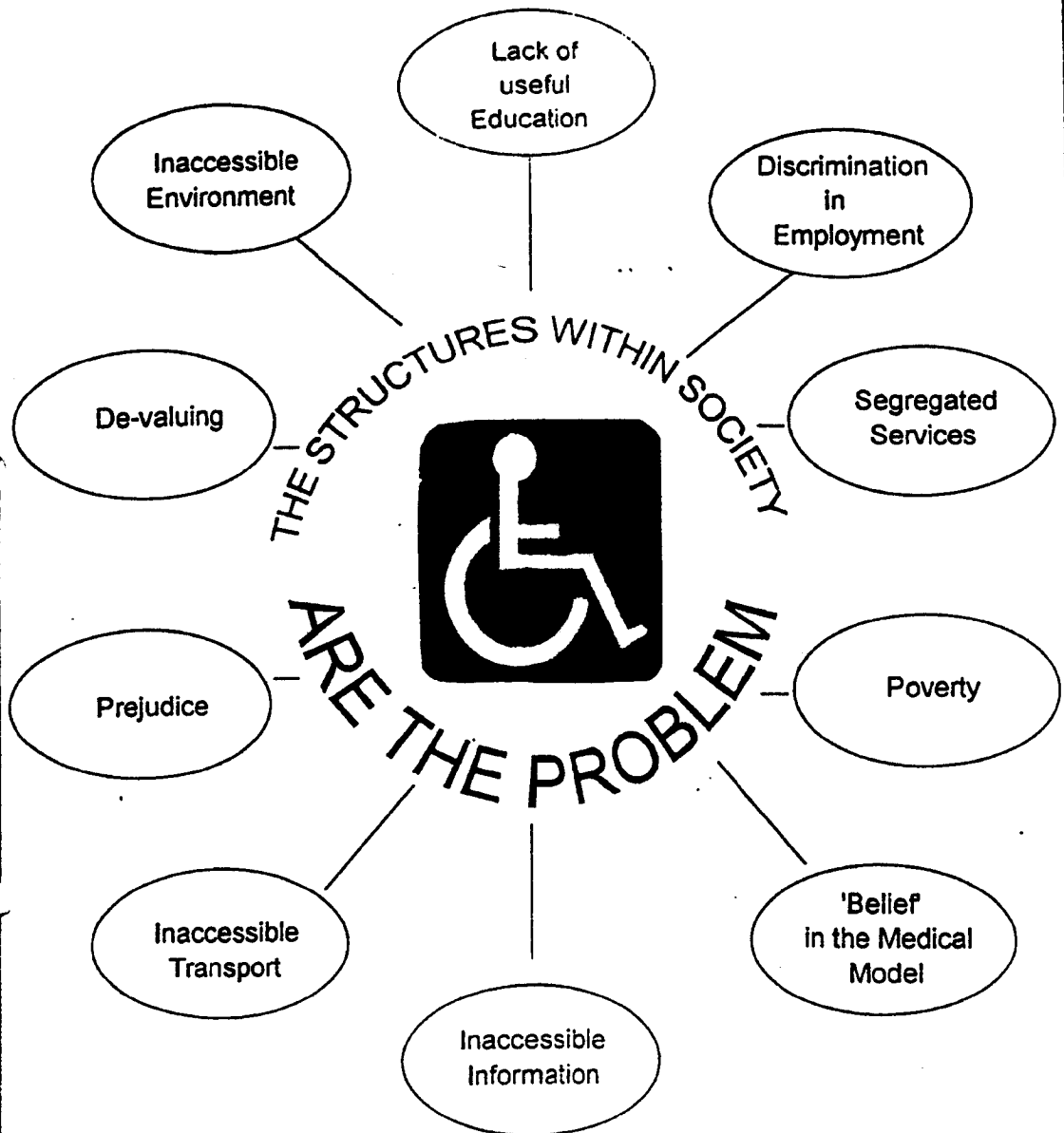


Figure 11 – Medical Model of disability

# THE SOCIAL MODEL



**DISABLED PEOPLE AS  
ACTIVE FIGHTERS FOR EQUALITY**

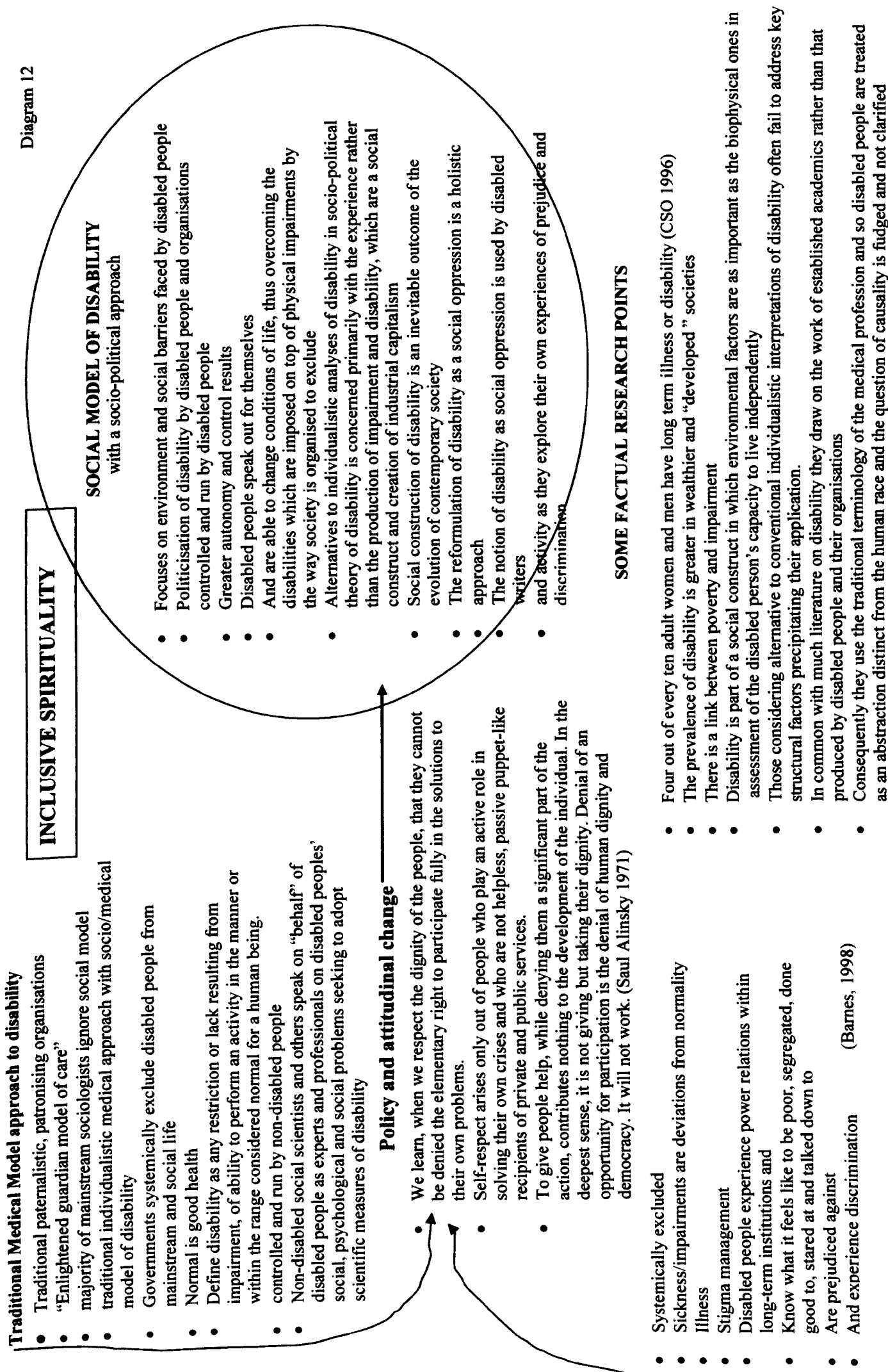
Figure 12 – Social Model of disability

It was crucial for our understanding of spirituality within this research project to have an authentic and adequately informed understanding of Disability, both theoretically and in practice/experience because the fundamental founding mission of Holton Lee is based on such reality and liberation. Therefore it is important to explain theory in some detail below both from two disabled people.

- i. Colin Barnes and
- ii. Tony Heaton

Using the same diagram structure as above, diagram 12 on the next page, “*Inclusive Spirituality*” depicts the difference between the Medical and Social Models, as written by Colin Barnes. (Barnes, 1998: 65-78)





ii.) Tony Heaton has written about art and disability in which he also refers to and expounds on the difference between the Medical and Social Models of Disability as indicated in diagram 13 on the next page, *"Disability and Art"*.

# DISABILITY AND ART

Diagram 13

Medical model

## Social Model

Art becomes sterile when it is imprisoned in the white cube. Disability is the problem of health and social service professionals, as long as it is kept behind the gates of the institution and can't escape into the mainstream, then no one needs to give it very much thought. Disability Art can and often does challenge perceptions should they either be shrouded in mystery and elitism, or hidden behind the white coat.

The social model of Disability, developed through the last quarter of last century was a radical shift in the thinking on disability, a notion that moved away from a care and control culture. It identified instead, that the "disabling" factors existed within the construction of society. It also recognised that whilst the level and nature of impairment had an impact on disabled peoples' lives, the "rights" taken for granted by the non-disabled, eg. access to public transport, mainstream education, physical access to goods, services and the built environment were denied to many disabled people.

The social model was liberating for many of us, it politicised the oppression of disabled people and for me, Disability Arts became a medium of expression as an artist, and a means to contribute to the dialogue on the position of disabled people within our society.

Disability Arts should highlight issues or enlighten, it may speak in a different voice to the art-language we, as art consumers may have grown accustomed to, or it may use the same devices but explore the material world that is exclusive to disability. It may make you question, or inspire you to work to change policies and practices that disadvantage and discriminate against us. It might make you smile at the irony or celebrate with us our pride, it may be different and raise issues about our culture as Disabled people ... it should be good. Tony Heaton - (published in Generate - a collaborative project between Artlink Exchange and Hull Museums and Art Gallery - 2002)

Oppression of disabled people

As individuals and as an organisation we have had a steep learning curve as we tried to “live out” what we said and as we tried to integrate the Four Aspects which compose Holton Lee. We have had to learn to change many of the attitudes we have learned from society and from theology, religion and the “church”, that is, to truly understand what “empowerment” means in an embodied and lived out “quality of life”, moving well beyond “theory”. What we were increasingly and more deeply learning and coming to realise was that spirituality is not able to be compartmentalised into sections, about our bodies, our whole world context, our personal and shared experiences, our theology, our local contexts, our churches, nations, charities, governments or organisations within our global village. Our inner and outer lives and ethics are connected and life is a whole, which we live together.

#### **d.) Spirituality and Art**

- “Personal Growth & Spirituality and the Arts/Creativity:-*
- we recognise that creativity is both life-giving and rooted in the energy of life. As such it involves the inner being in communication and connection with the outside world.
  - A piece of art may be a means of expressing something of the artist's own being, but also has the power to connect with the inner nature/spiritual aspect of the observer.”

We have read in interviews and discourse how being creative and having accessible and appropriate facilities available is essential to helping people discover hidden parts of themselves and to re-cover self-worth, integrity and self-esteem. Therefore I will now outline some theory of the relationship of spirituality to Art and Creativity, which takes place within our context.

We can now understand that it is through our imagination that the soul creates and constructs depth experience; it is the faculty which bridges, co-presents and co-articulates the visible and the invisible. (O'Donohue, 1997:9, 76) In order to keep our balance we need to hold the interior and exterior, visible and invisible, known and unknown, temporal and eternal together. Each person is an artist, in this primal and inescapable sense, with an inner artist who carries and shapes a unique world and love is the continuous birth of creativity within and between us. New creativity awakens in us when our forgotten or neglected inner wealth begins to reveal itself; we come home to ourselves and learn to rest within, bringing out the mystery of inner landscape.

(O'Donohue, 1997:1-22) As well as having a human need for our inner soul to respond to our environment, we all have a physical impulse to be creative; creativity lies at the heart of what we are about, according to Zohar. An interactive embodied exchange between our inner and outer environment, between our inner soul and our response to the environment is a human need, an "aesthetic" need. It has to do with the feel of object and the feelings they evoke as well as our need and instinct for values such as beauty and the "spirituality" which happens in this mutually creative dialogue and deep instinct to expand these qualities, between persons and our material implements and surroundings. When we can create we give meaning to something which never existed before and transform the materials used, thus, both the person and the materials are transformed into a new thing in this interaction with a new "articulation" of their own sense of beauty and to an incarnation of the relationship between the person and the material world and to what is produced, for example, a clay pot. The art piece is actualised and the person has made some new aspect of themselves. The whole creation has given birth to a small bit of reality. The embodiment of one's own potential helps with such self-discovery and we are able to become more of ourselves and bring something of ourselves into being. People actually carry nature within the physics of their own consciousness and so have a need to see nature reflected in their own environment. Zohar believes that if people can't discover themselves in their impoverished worlds then their alienation eats away at the whole fabric of modern society. (Zohar, 1991)

"Art is more than words" (Zappone, 1991:149) and landscape interpretations continually change, in art and spirituality alike, as the on-going work of imagining the environment continues. The very nature of landscape interpretation helps us to understand our intimate participation with it and as we listen to it and are joined to its movements, we can let it sink deeply into the pattern of our own being. This interaction between the interpretative process of our human psyche and the environment can result in a wide range of both psychological and spiritual experience, including a "sensed presence". (Lane, 1998:16, 40-42) Our artistic sensibilities probe the mystery of nature with our aesthetic, emotional and intuitive knowledge and response, which then can harmonise with our "fact" knowledge. In fact, our experience, insight and understanding of the land is enhanced the longer we experience our imaginative and emotional engagement with nature. Thus in our human relationship with the natural environment, our observations, through a "poetic process" are transformed into art. Having an



accompanying attitude of humility enhances our deep imaginative interaction, helping us to approach nature respectfully with an openness to see deeply into its heart. In fact, this sensibility is indeed indispensable if we are to notice the natural world and be able to take it into ourselves with the emotional involvement necessary for any authentic engagement with it. In this way our relationship of love develops through our interaction and contact and is then informed by our sympathy; in this relationship we can encounter the transcendent in nature and so enter into a relationship of mystery and intimate encounter. In this way we learn to listen carefully and “give imaginative voice” to the elusive traces of spirit in nature. (Burton-Christie, 1994:4-13)

The experiences described in the research data were not something which could be learned from reading a book or attending a workshop or by “thinking” about it, but rather through participation, personal connection, relationship and interaction with ourselves, others, nature and the Divine or Sacred. That is, if we are willing to let go, to risk, to learn, grow and change. As we have understood, in our modern culture our sensitivity to spiritual issues has been narrowed down and atrophied with the result that our modern “aesthetics” are inherently isolationist. Therefore as Gablik suggests we need to transcend this disconnectedness by forming new forms of art which emphasise this essential connectedness. She believes that a creative response to the needs of the planet actually demand a sensitive interaction with the environment. She also notes a new evolving relationship emerging between personal creativity and social responsibility and is therefore encouraging more participatory, socially interactive frameworks for art, with a shift from object to relationships. By this, she means, not just making “objects” but that, “... the ecological perspective connects art to its integrative role in the larger whole and the web of relationships in which art exists.” In this way a new emphasis falls on *community* and the environment rather than on individual achievement and accomplishment with a new corrective participatory “aesthetics” with value based art. This she believes happens when we cultivate a new listening self along with principles based on inter-dependence and the intertwining of self and other. Such creative potential as inherent in “partnership” is a new model for the practice of art to emerge in this ecological age which can happen as we return to our souls, thus releasing them from a cancer of the spirit, bringing head and heart together in an ethic of care, as part of the healing of the world. (Gablik, 1998:2-12) These insights are particularly relevant for us as reflected in what Mike said about his work with art and also in artist-

in-residence, James' experience, which reshaped his future direction, in making his art a more social statement.

Further key principles about the relationship of art to spirituality are outlined in diagram 14, "*A Paradigm for Change for Artists*" on the next page.

# SUZI GABLIK – A PARADIGM CHANGE FOR ARTISTS

Diagram 14

(Gablik 1998:1-11)

The socially dominant paradigm of compulsive and oppressive consumerism  
Our society has narrowed our sensitivity to moral and spiritual issues. A dominant monoculturalism which is un-ecological, non sustainable and isolationist, anti-ecological, unhealthy and destructive.  
Remaining aloof is a dangerous approach to current difficulties.  
Individualism, freedom and self-expression are the modernist buzzwords  
Resulting in alienation and confrontation  
Philosophies of the Cartesian era focus on individual experience –mechanism, positivism, empiricism, rationalism, materialism, secularism, and scientism – objectifying consciousness of the Enlightenment

There must be more than

superficial change. Individuals can reject prevailing cultural attitudes.

Artists can accelerate the process of change as we accept social and

environmental responsibility with multiculturalism or parallel cultures.

We have ended up with a belief structure which has blocked psychological and spiritual development.

Highly individualistic artists are trained to think in modernist terms therefore the idea of creative activity being directed towards answering collective cultural needs rather than personal desire seems irrelevant and presumptuous.

- Artists are becoming more engaged
- we will see art that is essentially social and purposeful
- art which rejects the myths of neutrality and autonomy
- the subject of social responsibility will be part of aesthetic models
- the challenge of the future is to transcend the disconnectedness and separation of the aesthetic from the social which exists within modernism which has exalted the complete autonomy of art, severing bonds with society.
- We are all together in the same global amputheatre; there are no longer sidelines because the psychic and social structures in which we live have become too unhealthy

- We need new forms to emphasise our essential interconnectedness rather than our separateness

- Forms to evoke the feeling of belonging to a larger whole rather than expressing the isolated alienated self.

- Exalted individualism isn't a creative response to the needs of the planet which demands a complex and sensitive form of interaction and linking

- A new evolving relationship between personal creativity and social responsibility with new patterns of mutualism and the development of an active and practical dialogue with the environment.

- If we are to avoid destroying the integrity of the ecosystem we must redesign our fundamental priorities otherwise we have about 40 yrs before we descend into a long economic and physical decline.

- But none of these changes can take place without the **transformation of individual priorities** and values to survive the transition to a sustainable world

- A new paradigm requires more than a conceptual change but that we **personally** leave behind some things which have been a central part of our individual and cultural self-definitions

- We need to reframe our modern world-view and its assumptions

- Art can also transform its goals and become accountable in the planetary whole with a useful role to play in the larger sphere of things. With the emergence of a more participatory, relational and socially interactive framework for art with a new paradigm which reflects a will to participate socially a **shift is needed** from objects to relationships.

- With the need for openness, contact and wholeness, no longer making "objects" but instead the ecological perspective connects arts to its integrative role in the larger whole and web of relationships in which art exists.

- A new emphasis falls on **community** and the **environment** and so gives a deeper account of what art is doing, reformulating its meaning beyond the gallery system to redress issues of context and social responsibility

- This requires a qualitative change in the way we think about art and may include uncomfortable personal consequences demanding a **change of consciousness** in order to construct a new vision and put it into practice as agents of change as we transform our old modes of understanding

- This begins with changes in one's own life in order to work in an expanded context which gives value to social and environmental factors as they try to express their work in some sense of service to the whole.

- The listening self with a more feminine mode of being is based on interdependence and the intertwining of the **self and other**
- There is creative potential inherent in partnerships as a new **model of practice** of art.

- Re-enchanting our whole culture is a crucial task of our time since world has been scraped out of soul and soul has been ground out of world in dualistic metaphysics. A return of the soul, with release from the affliction of nihilism, the "our culture's cancer of the spirit" can bring a more integrated **value-system** that brings head and heart together in an **ethic of care**, as part of the healing of the world.

## Summary

Our aim to live a holistic liberating non-compartmentalised praxis, requires a paradigm shift to a “both/and” attitude, which is integrative and inclusive, thereby not dividing the sacred and secular. It includes a way of structuring life and requires us to embrace the totality of our existence, thus helping to heal the dichotomies and divisions where the personal, spiritual and social are drawn into one coherent whole and in this way empowering us to live in a web of cosmic care and solidarity. Marginalised people and the earth are pushing us to redeem an earth-based spirituality, so we can see with our “loving eye” with a new lens, living with respect for others. In such a shift to mutuality the subjugated are empowered and the privileged listen and give up power “over” others, not simply exchanging places. Spirituality includes socio-political praxis thus reformulating disability with a holistic approach, thus rejecting the traditional paternalistic patronising approach to social policy and life which continues to happen because of current social oppression and. Instead Disabled people are able to change conditions of life. Disability Arts has become a medium of expression for artists to have a means to contribute to the dialogue on the position of disabled people within society. Each of us is an artist with an inner artist; new creativity can awaken in us when we come home to ourselves and learn to rest with an interactive embodied exchange between our inner and outer environment and our inner soul. This is a human need and thus spirituality happens in this mutually creative dialogue. Our human relationships with the natural environment through a “poetic process” can be transformed into art and so we can encounter the transcendent in nature and have an intimate encounter in a relationship of mystery. Thus we can transcend disconnectedness and atrophy with new forms of art which emphasise essential connectedness through a sensitive interaction with the environment and between personal creativity and social responsibility in community with a corrective participatory “aesthetic” in value based art, in interdependence and partnership in this ecological age which happens as we return to our souls and release them from the cancer of the spirit, bringing head and heart together.

We have now considered the Four Aspects together with a non-compartmentalised view of a spirituality, which includes all the wider aspects of our lives, that is our body, mind,

feelings, and governing principles of life in relation to our families, communities, livelihood and the world at large. However, all need the same attention since consciousness in one area doesn't necessarily transfer to the other parts of our lives, as Ghandi pointed out, *"One cannot do right in one department of life while still occupied in doing wrong in another department. Life is an indivisible whole"* Therefore we must choose to look at what is unattended. Buddhist Kornfield emphasises that our meditation does not separate spiritual practice from politics or compassion from justice. Rather as he pointed out below:

- Basic human needs must be included in our spiritual lives and practice otherwise we may suffer unnecessary poor health or emotional problems.
- We may believe that the body, relationships, money, sexuality, family, community, politics or future planning is unspiritual, dangerous, ugly and a trap which divides the world so part of it is seen as not holy and our experiences of realisation remain compartmentalised and unfulfilled.
- The truth is that these interior boundaries must be dissolved and as we listen deeply and honestly to what has been feared or left out we will find our freedom.
- If we choose not to look, that which is unattended will come to find us. The lost parts of ourselves will present themselves, knocking even louder if we don't listen to their cries and we end up hearing their voices in divorce or depression, illness, or some strange failure.
- But if we do listen and welcome all parts of the self we will find they enrich our garden as nourishment for life itself.
- Our spiritual life becomes more about mercy and loving kindness than about struggles over self or battles with our ego or sin.

Our personal experience of spirituality is synthesized with practice in the totality of our human experience. Authentic spirituality praxis therefore includes an integration of our inner spirituality with our outer action which happens when we have a personal experience of love resulting in transformed ego so we can move beyond ourselves. Such integration is not gained by rational understanding but through an interior realisation. (Kornfield, 2000)

Subsequent questions and points which emerged are:



- Can we dare to let ourselves be challenged by unjust, unequal situations, refugees, oppression, the poor, the earth and the environment?
- The real journey takes place in the depths of our souls, in the depth of the human and cosmic journey in all its realms: psychological, social, cultural, political, economic, ecological and cosmological
- Such a journey is only possible in relation to the divine mystery, is never self-initiated, sustained or fulfilled since God empowers at each step as we surrender in love.
- We need a large proportion of the human race to seek the path of wisdom if the world is to be preserved and so spiritual vision is not an elitist luxury but vital to our survival.
- The danger is to sabotage our journey by becoming “spiritual tourists” not committing ourselves to one path on our spiritual journey which requires patience, endurance, wisdom, courage and humility and not succumbing to difficulties or slipping back into old habits and so waste years or a lifetime. (Dryer, 1993: 612-622) (Rinpoche, 1996) (Ruether, 1993) and (Bryne, 1993:565-577)

“Spirituality praxis”, is about a way and quality of life, which is one of inter-connection, inter-relationship, inter-dependence with our selves, others, the environment and the Divine as one interconnected whole. As we have read, Holton Lee was founded on such hope and commitment and is only lived by involvement when we can stand up to unjust institutions and protest against governments in a struggle for peace and justice as ordinary people whose hearts long for love, order and peace to reign instead of war and greed and hideous poverty. Our vision must be moved by love and concern. However in order to do so we need to be able to take the blame for our deep rooted attitudes which need radical change, facing the truth so that we can then relate to others sensitively and honestly and be able to love across social and religious barriers. This radical change requires transformation which is developed in Phase Seven. (Lees, 1987)

### **Phase Five: The Relationship between Spirituality and Theology**

Holton Lee’s orthopraxis is embodied and lived with the whole person, head, heart, hands and feet, overcoming dichotomies and dualisms, experiencing the “something more” which is not grasped by objective knowledge and which moves out towards the

world of others and God. Love for God and neighbour is not separate but fleshed out in daily life along with responsibility for the social sphere as well. We have lived in the gap and on the bridge between spirituality and theology and found reconciliation through “loving knowledge” which transcended reasoning and thinking, with a “loving power” which is a compound of wisdom and love, which can flow out on the surrounding world. Spirituality has been and is a religious phenomenon as we live as “being-in-love” which is the core of authentic religion, an awareness which has also permeated our research as a scientific enterprise. Our resultant concrete “loving conduct” attempts to meet needs and problems while also addressing and trying to eliminate the causes within systems and issues so that our practice is not shallow. This has been the fruit of combining practice and theory; we have found that there doesn't need to be a separation between the “emotional” and “intellectual” because understanding and living it has been embodied in people in a context which requires socio-political approaches. We are a “community” gathered around a vision exploring together how to live it out. We haven't found it necessary to separate out religion, theology and spirituality and further compartmentalise them, but quite the opposite, we have found that we needed to try to integrate them as we do everything else at Holton Lee, not to encourage further dichotomy, dualism and separation. We didn't want to be a cultism or have superficial dilettantism or live out a “sheer silliness” but tried to live in the gap and religious vacuum and find personal and corporate theory not further oppression and marginalisation, so that we can provide a meeting ground for those who are searching. Our institution is not a church and we need on-going corrective criticism perhaps in the way of a spiritual director for the organisation as suggested in the research data and interviews. We wanted to combine the intellectual, the system and the experiential aspects of theology, religion and spirituality through day-to-day self-integration and organisational integration through loving relationships, embracing truth at our grass-root level organisation which is committed to justice. We have pursued our spirituality in as deep and broad a way as possible without defensiveness.

In this research project we have therefore studied religion, spirituality and theology as the science of God and understood our resultant “knowing” as a process of experiencing, understanding and judging combined with scientific methods but also in obedience to transcendental precepts. We were attentive to data, understood it with intelligence and made reasonable theory in an on –going way recognising that the more data we got the more insights we had and so made better theories. We attempted this

process with responsibility, love and a trust that the theories and insights which emerged have lead to self-transcendence and wisdom. This wisdom and loving knowledge is not conceptual since God cannot be thought but loved. Our scholarship and study included the study of issues and systems in an attempt to avoid shallow practice or counter-productiveness. We have involved ourselves with recent theological developments, with the other, social location, interdisciplinarity as we studied spirituality itself. As such our human enterprise values recognition of “the other”, which Schneiders defines as anyone different from the “norm” in Classical, Western philosophy and theology, with equality, mutuality, relationality, interdependence and cooperation, as a human way of being in preference to imperialism, domination, rugged individualism and competition. (Schneiders, 2000) “The other” was the purpose and heart of our context and search; we wanted to address oppression and exclusion. We also attempted to bridge the gap between experience and analysis; therefore our inquiry was not patriarchal scholarship but “situated” and the resultant knowledge inclusive and made accessible for others. It moved across disciplinary lines as much as possible, thus trying to re-vision theology through a synthesis in the service of social change and to address social exclusion, oppression, marginalisation particularly for the disabled. We considered our study and field as a legitimate academic discipline, which studied the experiential interaction between human and divine in cross-cultural, interreligious, inclusive and non-religious research. Our need, motive and desire was to continually respond to our real-life issues and questions in our search for meaning about spirituality praxis, with the agenda brought by those who have been marginalized. Our new research approach was therefore, of necessity, designed so it could respond to these needs and concerns adequately. We recognised all along that our research need was not just for us but for our global village, which needs renewed energy for right relations among all beings since we are living in a enormous world wide crisis which grows daily. In that sense we continue to live in hope and commitment to co-operate with the Spirit of God, in a context, centre of excellence, community and small group of committed people gathered around a vision trying to live true and holistic spirituality which includes the whole of life, both personal and social.

Hopefully we can then, as a community of love, continue to offer “creative education” through actual experience, offering a future spirituality which can have an impact on an understanding of the spiritual life helping therefore to re-shape theological spirituality in terms of mutuality, compassion, and bodiliness, continuing to be a place of refuge to

which others are drawn. Of course we recognise that these aspirations are not easily or quickly achieved but we believe that orthopraxis at Holton Lee is enabling us to bridge spirituality and religion in a creative way. Nonetheless we appreciate that we have much to learn. (see Discussion Paper on this subject in the Appendix number 16)

### **Phase Eight: Context for Spirituality Praxis**

I have outlined the theoretical exploration on spirituality and context under the headings of:

- i. Introduction
- ii. Contextualising our research concern
- iii. Living in our contexts with true spirituality
- iv. Relevant research data
- v. Understanding organisational structure change
  - a. Functioning of an organisation – Coghlan
  - b. Developing spirituality within an organisational context – Critten
  - c. Communities of Practice - Wenger
  - d. Mini societies – Handy
- vi. Context as environment
  - a. An environment of love - Lees
  - b. A conducive environment – Parffrey

#### **i. Introduction**

Through our research process we have learned that it is imperative to maintain a healthy environment for spirituality praxis which therefore means having an appropriate organisational infrastructure and policies, which implies understanding community, organisation, corporation, management and leadership, motives, shared intent, monitoring ethos and moving from the dominant to the inclusive spiritual paradigm. Sheldrake, Soelle and Schneiders have emphasised above the importance of considering “context”, within the field of spirituality, thereby necessitating conversation with the social sciences; the socio-political approach is particularly noticeable in liberationist, feminist and justice-focused approaches to spirituality.

In this last Phase of the model I will outline theory which emerged as a result of our subsequent “research and development” of spirituality praxis and subsequent organisational structural changes. Subsequently and unwittingly we found ourselves having to consider yet another very complex and complicated dilemma, that of “spirituality and work” which is a growing and proliferating phenomenon with much being written from many and various disciplines and the danger and difficulty is that it can become yet another fad supporting “techniques” and formulas to ensure “soul at work”. As Midgley stated, there is a growing phenomenon in the search for spiritual meaning in work. (Midgley, 2002) Others say that this new spirituality in business means different things to different people and those who do practice it are not always clear in defining their efforts. For some it means a search for personal meaning, for others affirmation of God and Gospels in the workplace and for others it contains much of the “New Age” religious movement or is a “fad” with little more than the acknowledgement of the importance of feelings and a “new consciousness”. (Cavanaugh, 2000:152). We found ourselves having to try to make theoretical and practical sense of this new macro development particularly since spirituality is understood from where we stand and spirituality praxis is always contextualised; we were also therefore very committed try to “understand” and develop sound and authentic theory. In the 1990’s, according to Holmes, a number of books appeared on the market, relating to spirituality, work and leadership in the life of the corporation, some of which was a “quick-fix” attempt to get spirituality into leadership and the workplace. (Holmes, 2002:26). In the last decade there has also been serious academic interest in the possible relevance of spirituality to organisations and the importance of visionary organisational theory especially since business literature is awash with pop psychology. So an understanding of a deeper view of basic core values and higher purpose for organisational life is being sought rather than one of solely acquiring money and power which sometimes can lead to a renewal or transformation of the work organisation itself. To date most of the academic roots of workplace spirituality are actually in the long-standing literature of consciousness, self-actualisation and self-transformation. (Bibberman and Whitty, 2000) Perhaps this study will now make a contribution from the academic field of spirituality offering new theoretical perspectives.

## **ii. Contextualising our Research Concern and Need for Developing Spirituality**



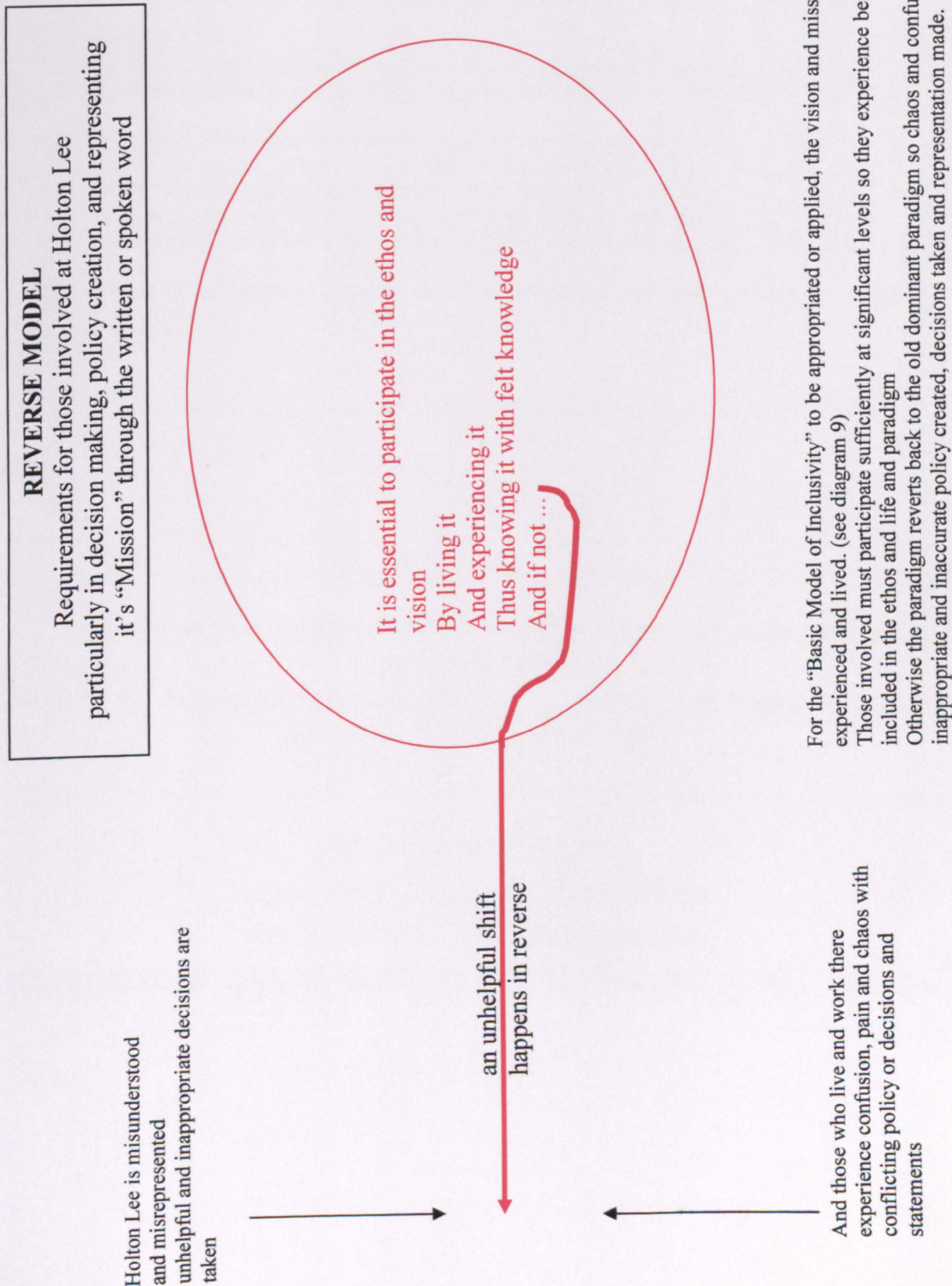
Research within the “context” can help to bring about necessary change, as we have experienced. Reason outlines that with transformational leadership the exercise of transforming power is essential if organisations are to do collaborative inquiry with triple loop learning which involves a corrective change in the system, which moves it beyond the current system of practice through a shift of comprehension of consciousness and that permits a more encompassing view of practice. (Reason, 1994) One of the difficulties with “spirituality praxis” is in making the inner connection between globalisation and individualisation with our outer global village because the more globally the market economy structures itself, the less interest it demonstrates in the social and ecological web in which humans live and the more it requires of the individual who is without any relation whatsoever. (Soelle, 2002:191-194) Our process therefore had to include an understanding of what “organisation” and a conducive structure could mean as a container for spirituality praxis. As pointed out in the research data there was conflict initially until our structure changed to a more collaborative and flat structure, which was less hierarchical.

We also had to understand more deeply and comprehensively in this doctoral level research how the process itself was connected to the “organisation” enabling and effecting changes within our context for researching spirituality praxis. Critten suggested that pilot groups can surface such knowledge and that organisations must embrace new ways of looking at the world since they are always on the “edge of chaos”. Process is a two way street of reciprocal relationship, where trust creates trust and empowers people and the organisation, and thus leads to more satisfaction. “Managers obviously want results and not process but development is an increase in capacity and potential not an increase in attainment ... it has less to do with how much one has than with how much one can do with whatever one has.” (Critten, 1998) Our organisational culture was involved in collaborative inquiry which involved a corrective change to the system of practice through a shift of comprehension of consciousness and learning. (Reason, 1991) Conducting our research together, as a “real-time” community of inquiry challenged incongruities within the organisation’s mission and therefore also functioned and helped to bridge differences which were noted between “knowledge and practice” thus helping to inform the organisation and support organisational transformation. This happened because our intention was to “empower” all, with the result that hierarchical aspects of relationship were changed to more peer like qualities,

which increased the “I-thou” partnership through conducting valid research together, so we were able to challenge incongruities within our organisation’s mission. Torbert believes that no journal article can play a major role in teaching us how to work and love and inquire in new ways but that a multi-voiced book which interweaves third person science, first person autobiography and 2<sup>nd</sup> person fiction may. However, as he points out, such initiative requires a high commitment to integrating 1-2-3 person in order to generate light emancipatory conversation rather than that of heat, anger and panic which can happen with unexpected views shared. The potential however is to create a “real time community of inquiry” in a way that academic science cannot typically do, which is what we have done and although this report is not a work of fiction it does incorporate much of what he has “thought” and suggested above. (Torbert, 2000)

It seemed that we were thrown in the deep end to swim around trying to find a way forward in the complexity of spirituality, theology and religion within an organisation and workplace, placed within our global home context. Although we are a small organisation and charity, none-the-less we were increasingly made aware:

a.) that we are not separate from but part of the whole web of life and  
b.) that the research was laying foundations for our future praxis and for other audiences and therefore needed to be particularly sound and relevant. In this research and report we obviously began to understand, more deeply and significantly, the need for integration, that is, not only the integration of the Four Aspects at Holton Lee but of our inner and outer ethic and lives, so that what we say is what we do. However, this integration is not gained by rational understanding but through interior realisation, that is, through change and transformation, our inner spirituality can be lived in a manner consistent with our outer action. The implication is that we first have to know change and love within our selves, then within the environment of the organisation and its structures, which might then as a micro context, be able to offer something of a model to the larger macro and global village and society. It is important to understand our motives and the process which is involved. It has been important for us to understand what the vision was and is, in order for it to be a “shared vision”, where we all sing the same tune and we all have a shared intent within our context, otherwise decisions taken are inconsistent and people get confused and fall in the gaps as described in diagram 15 on next page, “*Reverse Model*”.



The second person writers made many references to such a need and in fact as a research group we took upon ourselves the task of being guardians of the founding vision, ethos and roots, since we recognised that it had almost got lost as stated in Chapter Five.

Therefore there was the need to integrate “spirituality” theory and practice in and within the organisation on a structural and daily basis, that is, the need to link, apply and appropriate the “theory” or theology we were learning not only as individuals but as an organisational context, with that of a liberatory orthopraxis which empowers people within a structure and system which facilitated right relations, justice and peace. People are not separate from the system they live in or are a part of; a system which allows “good practice” was required. Our structure had changed with the day of facilitation with Sam Field, described in Chapter Five which itself occurred as an outcome of the research process but we still needed to implement it, continue to embody it, “live it” and develop it with appropriate leadership, insight and relevancy. We therefore needed to name it and link it with “spirituality” theoretically, for the sake of the future and to be able to put it in writing for future generations so that we were not colluding with the Modern Paradigm which prefers equity in the name of profit. Tony’s leadership was important, as director and as part of the entire process; more understanding of it will be considered later in this section. We are an “outreaching organisation” in the sense that people come from a national radius and learn and grow, are empowered and enabled, through what they experience, facilitated through the Arts, Environment and Personal Growth and Spirituality as well as through learning within the Social Model of Disability, rather than remaining stuck within the Dominant Medical Model which is the only one most have known. We also interface significantly with other organisations and partner with other Charities and those who come on conferences and workshops. We therefore have a growing significant and well-respected voice and impact in the fields and disciplines represented by each of the Aspect Groups.

### **iii. Living in our Contexts with “True Spirituality”**

Holton Lee has a holistic view of life and therefore needed an organisational structure, which could be such a container and environment, that is, we needed a quantum

understanding of organisation in which to live our quantum relationships and spirituality.

Some of the considerations and implications of such an awareness are:

- The ground state of the quantum vacuum is the incomprehensible ground of being, the immanent God, which we are in mutually creative dialogue with, resulting in the process of our evolving coherence which helps us to transcend the poverty of meaning in our lives which are formulated by reason.
- In our awakening resistance to oppression we can rectify distortions of the current dominant social-political Patriarchal world and its interpretation. We can instead transform relationships in society through revitalising spiritual energy thus breaking the grip of dominating forces and so empower a transformative praxis toward a fulfilling future for all.
- In this way all who are oppressed can be empowered with a sense of human dignity, a sense of self-hood able to live in free and caring relationships in mature spirituality, thus fostering connectedness and solidarity, with self-respect enhanced.
- We are linked with everything else and with the immanent God since there is no distance or separateness in space and time in our synchronistic dance together.
- By thus integrating science/physical and theological/spiritual realities we realise the need to change existing imbalanced and dysfunctional relationships, models and structures, to those of connectedness in relationship living in a transformed society of mutuality with the Spirit encircling the globe, awakening love.
- We now realise the extent to which we are physically interwoven, which affects our way of being in the world and our understanding of relationships to ourselves and others. (Zohar, 1994), (Johnson, 1998) and (Rinpoche, 1992)

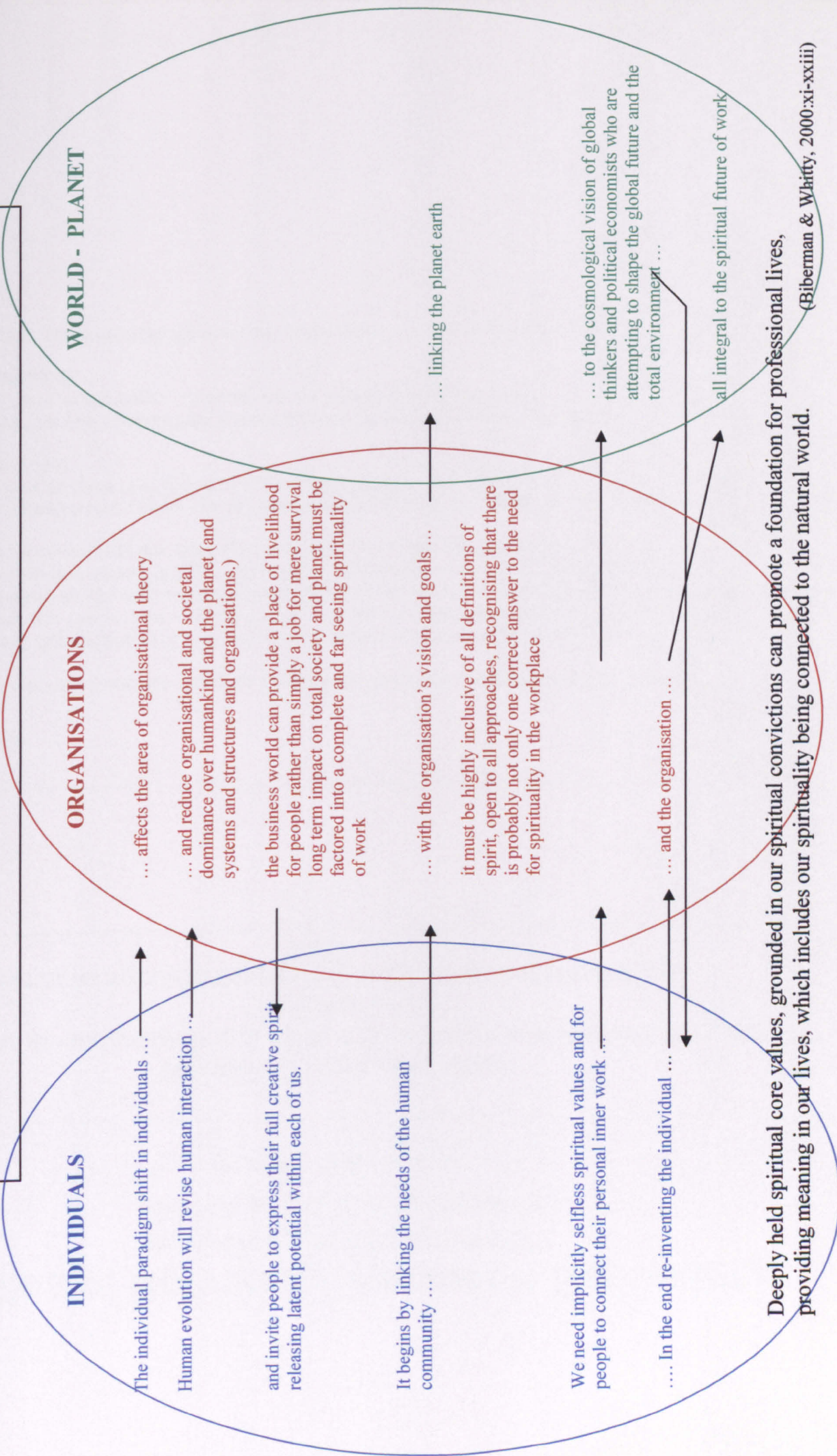
If people within an organisation appreciate the reality of quantum relationships and spirituality, then the structure itself needs to be one which supports such insight, understanding and living as a container and environment which can safeguard, facilitate and enhance such a spirituality praxis. As we have understood, it would therefore facilitate the attributes of inclusivity and mutuality “with” people who are part of it, not with a Patriarchal Dominant power “over” people, because that would embed even more dualisms and dichotomies. This understanding is necessary in



order for Holton Lee's praxis to be kept alive and consistent with the intentions and spirit of its own founding vision which is to be a "centre to which people can come to discover new and innovative approaches in practical matters or ways of integrating the spiritual, psychological or physical aspects of their lives, rather than separating out and compartmentalising, making a division between science and religion, able-bodied and disabled, creative and practical, thus demonstrating a holistic and healing view of life". Thus we needed to incorporate the understanding and insights and lived research experience put forward by the co-researchers and other contemporary writers and perspectives. Our past history is not separate from our present praxis but rather informs it. The *Then, Now and Tomorrow* are linked as are all of our relationships, past and present, within the context of our wider world. In summary then our personal and individual paradigm shifts have affected areas of our organisational theory and practice which in turn can affect the planet and our global village; they inform each other in interaction as summarised in diagram 16, "*Spirituality and the Organisations/Workplace*" on the next page.

**SPIRITUALITY AND THE ORGANISATION/WORKPLACE**

“Individual and healthy work lives beget a truly healthy workplace.”  
Spirituality is a vital asset to individuals, organisations and society, helping people to treat themselves and others properly



(Biberman & Whitty, 2000:xi-xxiii)

#### **iv. Relevant Research Data**

Second person data highlighted the fact that without this research process we would have most likely become more exclusively focused on the “business” aspects. We became increasingly aware of several things:

- a) that our spirituality is clearly connected to the natural world, which we recognise includes our relationship with the natural world surrounding us;
- b) our individual and organisational effectiveness has been improved, as some of the interviewees have pointed out, by making them more aware of a transcendent dimension to life;
- c) which has inspired and resourced art and creativity and
- d) helped to provide a peaceful atmosphere, and
- e) also heightened an awareness to our senses and the deeper meaning of life.
- f) Because of our history and founding vision, we already had a spiritually based culture, with basic attitudes and practices, to some degree, but through this research we have been able to make our understanding more explicit by “naming” what spirituality praxis involves, by having a written spirituality statement and policy, thereby enabling it to be more “corporately owned” with a shared intent within changed structures.
- g) This Doctoral research has also laid deeper foundations of understanding which can help us to choose appropriate staff, help us to inform others, who join Holton Lee in the longer-term future, of our vision and ethos and ensure on-going awareness-raising and dissemination.
- h) Our motive for existing is not “capitalism” as a profit making business, but to fulfil a vision and mission of empowerment and care, so our starting and ending point may differ from many other organisations but still there must be common principles and guidelines which can be shared.
- i) Early on in the research we recognised how we were in danger of being influenced by the *Modern Paradigm* which results in systems and organisational processes preferring inequity in the name of profit which was in contrast to and incompatible with our own vision and ethos

## **v. Understanding Organisational Structure Change**

As we moved from I to we to us to them, within the organisational environment, and through the various stages of our MODEL, we basically found ourselves having to build and sustain relationships along with deepening our understanding of our shared mission and intent. Such “development” has resulted in a “Holton Lee Community” as indicated and expressed in the data. Our shared journey within iterative cycles was progressive and deepening, individually, as groups and within the organisation.

### **a. The Functioning of an Organisation – Coghlan and Brannick**

Our Participative Action Research led us into deep learning process which itself facilitated individual, group and organisational structural change and transformation, helping us to address our need to establish healthy spirituality praxis within our secular organisational context. It is important now to outline “theory” and understanding about what took place in such a process, within our “system”. What emerged from our experience, consistent to our ethos, is explained and “made sense of” through Coghlan’s and Brannick’s theoretical understanding as outlined below.

Their understanding of research within an organisation has been very helpful. They explained that an organisation is a whole made up of interrelated and interdependent parts and systems in the same way that a body is, with interdependent and interrelated functions which depends on a holistic view of how all the parts work together. The organisation is also dependent on its external environment for its survival. In systems thinking, linear cause and effect analysis is replaced by viewing patterns of interaction, which mutually influence each other. “Dynamic complexity” refers to situations where a system is complex because of multiple causes and effects over time and it provides a perspective of viewing and understanding how a system is held together by patterns of action and reaction, relationships, meanings and hidden rules and the role of time. Because, in *Action Research*, tentative explanations are formed as the story unfolds, articulating elements to consider and interventions to change them where required. In traditional research approaches intuition is frequently placed against reasoning and is considered alien from a research process. But Senge suggests the system approach holds the key to integrating intuition and reason, “... because intuition goes beyond linear thinking to recognise patterns, draw analogies and solve problems creatively.” Change

and learning, which are central to Action Research, applies not only to individuals but also to groups, between groups and to organisations. A system must unlearn before it can relearn and has three stages: being motivated to change, changing and making the change survive and work, and so attention to all three stages is crucial in this process of re-education. Researchers need to be aware that people in organisations resist change as well. There is a distinction between change and learning. *Single loop learning* deals with routine issues and *double loop learning* involves a change of thinking or adoption of a different mental model, according to Argyris.

*First order change* occurs within an existing way of thinking and *second order change* occurs when the first order is inadequate and requires lateral thinking and questioning and the altering of core assumptions, which underlie the situation. *Third order change* occurs then when complex attitudinal and cultural problems, which can actually also be symptoms, are necessarily addressed before problem resolution and *organisational transformation* can happen. It occurs when members of the organisation question their own assumptions and points of view and develop and implement new ones. They point out that it is critical for an action researcher to inquire into those patterns and facilitate the group in surfacing and examining them, rather than making a private and untested interpretation, thus taking what is directly observable into the realm of meaning does require skills in inquiry and intervention.

On reflection, we can now recognise that the changes which did occur during our research period did become *third order* when we began to recognise that the organisational structure itself in some measure was unhelpful as an environment and container for healthy spirituality praxis. As the research data has indicated, over a period of time we pointed this out to the Director and Trustees and subsequently they decided to get in an external facilitator with the result that the structures changed as already outlined in Chapter Five. We did therefore experience the three stages of: being motivated to change, changing and making the change. However, this “change” event did not happen easily or quickly. The process of our growing awareness within the research group, then communicating our insights, effectively took a year before our awareness was embraced sufficiently well enough for the Trustees to get in an external facilitator. Then it took a further two years of research process to identify a way to understand and begin to live a healthy spirituality praxis within the new structure which



required us as a system to unlearn before we could relearn, which is a process which is still continuing today within the organisation.

### ***Complexity – four levels of change***

The change process was complex and is easier to name, identify and describe in hindsight or on reflection. In that sense, in the midst of the “process”, we experienced the on-going difficulty of integrating intuition and reason and being able to go beyond linear thinking in order to recognise patterns, draw analogies and solve our problems creatively. In many ways, Coghlan and Brannick describe and make theoretical sense of what we experienced outlining levels of complexity, where the individual, group, inter-group and organisational are used as frameworks for understanding organisational processes. They point out that levels are not understood as echelon as in a chain of command but rather as a construct in organisational behaviour, that is, levels in terms of how people participate in organisations. There are four levels of complexity:

- 1) the individual,
- 2) face-to-face team,
- 3) interdepartmental group and
- 4) the organisation.

The *individual* is understood as the bonding relationship the individual has with the organisation and vice versa. The more complex approach to participation exists in establishing effective working relationships in a *face-to-face team* and then even more complex involvement is the *interdepartmental group* interface where teams have to be co-ordinated in order to achieve complex tasks and maintain a balance of power among competing interest groups. The most complex however, is the relationship of the *total organisation* to its external environment and so its key task is to adapt to environmental forces driving for change. All these levels then were considered within our research process, particularly while maintaining an ongoing and accompanying awareness of emerging areas of dissatisfaction and the flow of information within the organisation, which was essential throughout the whole process. In so doing, as researcher, along with the co-researchers, we were also thus challenged to move beyond consideration of group levels only, in order to consider dynamics at other levels, which were having on-going impact on the organisation’s health. We had growing understanding that such

organisational levels are important dynamics in organisational politics, particularly since political behaviour may be in individual, team and interdepartmental groups, since individuals or groups may find themselves engaging in covert or overt political behaviour to obtain more resources.

### ***Our change process***

As stated, since we were considering how to establish a sound spirituality praxis within our voluntary sector charity and infrastructure, it meant that our organisation as context also needed to be sound and functioning in a healthy way. Our research analysis therefore also needed to include consideration about how these inter-level elements and relationships within the organisational structure, could be “lived out”, since spirituality is not just individual but systemic and contextualised and either liberatory or empowering or it is not. Each of the four levels has a dynamic relationship with the other three particularly because feedback loops form a complex pattern of relationships; therefore dysfunctions at any of the four levels can cause dysfunction at any of the other three. An *individual's* stress can be expressed in dysfunctional behaviour and affect the teams' ability to function affectively, affecting their ability to cope and have a bonding relationship with the organisation. If a *team* is not functioning effectively then it can limit *interdepartmental* effectiveness and co-ordination thereby affecting the ability of the *whole organisation*. In this way, we understood that the dynamic systemic relationship between individual bonding, team functioning, inter-group co-ordination and organisational adaptation, both had an impact and were critical for us to understand in our process of identifying and describing the need for change, defining the future state, assessing the present and managing the transition state.

Although I was certainly not aware of such implication and complexity at the outset of our Action Research process, it fairly soon became evident that it required such a systemic view of the complex interrelationship and interdependence of the individual, face-to-face team, interdepartmental groups and the organisation. Therefore it was not a simple process in that it required a growing understanding and awareness of what was happening within the structure, that is, for us to be able to continually discern whether the organisation was functioning in a healthy and authentic way and thus able to fulfil the founding vision and mission for “spirituality praxis”. The second person research discourse has referred to such concerns and awareness and the continual need for

“pulse-taking or monitoring” and has noted how change was implemented as “spirituality” was interwoven throughout the organisation.

In Chapter Five I referred to first and second person involvement in research. My experience of *first person* research within in my own organisation was linked to my own sense of bonding to the organisation, (see Chapter Seven). In that sense it was critical how I consciously framed issues within the process, which needed to be accompanied by on-going self-awareness. *Second person* research was also particularly critical since it involved building and managing collaborative relationships in teams, interdepartmental and organisational levels. As I have previously pointed out, not all understood the relevance of the research project, therefore throughout the process it was essential to continue to seek to engage particularly key individuals who, in some measure, denied the relevance of the research project, even after the research group was formed and functioning. As indicated in their discourse, even some of the research group, particularly in the initial stages, couldn’t always see the need or relevance for the research and accompanying development. However as the data stated most of them also had an implicit understanding that we needed to persist for the sake of the long-standing founding vision. Therefore we were always also able to appreciate that other groups within the organisation found it hard to understand as well and so continued to find every opportunity we could to disseminate our need, insights and understanding. The Learning Agreement, signed by key stakeholders within the organisation, helped to determine and ensure the commitment to change within the organisation. Coghlan and Brannick have emphasised that the skills required in building and maintaining such collaborative relationships with individuals, teams, across teams and across organisations are critical to the success of the project and I certainly recognise that, more significantly having learned and understood this more in hindsight, than in the midst of the research process. (Coghlan & Brannick, 2001: 97-107)

I am now aware that our experience underlines Coghlan and Brannick’s understanding and can make a contribution of understanding for other organisations. Theoretical underpinnings and our living grounded theory, could have a generative appropriation more broadly within other organisations recognising that an organisation is a whole, like a body is, with interdependent and interrelated functions which depend on a holistic view and not only on how the body functions but on how it relates to its external environment. Therefore it is important to be cognisant of how patterns of interaction

mutually influence each other. Knowing spirituality in an “embodied” way is important, for us as individuals, and in the same way, the organisation needs to embody spirituality within its structure, attitudes, guests, visitors, staff, ethos, land, relationships, vision and mission, so that people who experience life within the organisational context can also experience, feel and connect with their own spirituality and not experience further disconnection and separateness. In that sense our “felt knowing” had to move from head and thoughts to heart, feelings and experience. It is not through ideas, ideology or theory alone but theory combined with and informing practice, which led to our orthopraxis which then offered a liberatory, emancipatory, empowering and enabling environment where justice and peace can be lived out, at least in some measure.

The “system” or body is held together through patterns of action, reaction, meanings, relationships and even hidden rules, and as with any relationship, change and learning therefore goes beyond linear thinking to actual relationship, which does not consist of just “thinking” but integrates intuition and reason. When we understand this then patterns and analogies can be used creatively to solve problems within the system or body so it can be transformed in the process. The tree image used throughout our process has helped us to think laterally and not solely in a linear fashion but “research and development” started and continued with a “bottom up” view and process, from the bottom of the tree roots, not by trying to “think” our way forward. Coghlan and Brannick described how the need for the research process can start with an individual who then ultimately sets up a group and that since there is great need for collaborative relationships, great skill is needed, which we seem to have managed.

Our *third order change* and transformation which we needed in order to correct our somewhat dysfunctional organisation actually did require the three levels which Coghlan and Brannick suggested:

- 1) that of being motivated to change,
- 2) actually changing and then
- 3) being able to maintain the change, which the co-researchers have referred to as needing a group to keep an eye on or finger on the pulse of the vision.

The research design suggested a movement from the ego-centred I, to the we of the group, to the us of the organisation in order to become corporate in our understanding and shared intent. Thus we were also moving through what Coghlan and Brannick have

named for us as the four levels of the individual, group, inter-group and organisation. In addition we recognise that first, second and third person action research participation actually facilitated the transformation at personal, group and organisational levels. The system/body interacts with its external environment and so the particular and specific awareness of spirituality therefore had to consider this as the model indicates with an “inner and outer ethic”. As a result and outcome now, of what we learned in the research process, the co-researchers and others interviewed have emphasised the concern for the organisation to continue good information flow between the Four Aspects/Departments, along with highlighting the need to maintain on-going support and resources with mutual and equal development in and between the Aspect Groups. The new structure in place, that is, of the Development Group and its inter-relationship with the Management Group and Trustees, should facilitate this communication within our body/system but it will need to continue to be developed and monitored so it can maintain taking the pulse of the founding vision and ethos.

Diagram 17, “*Action Research and Re-Education within an Organisation*”, on the next page, gives a visual representation and understanding of Coghlan and Brannick’s theory outlined above.

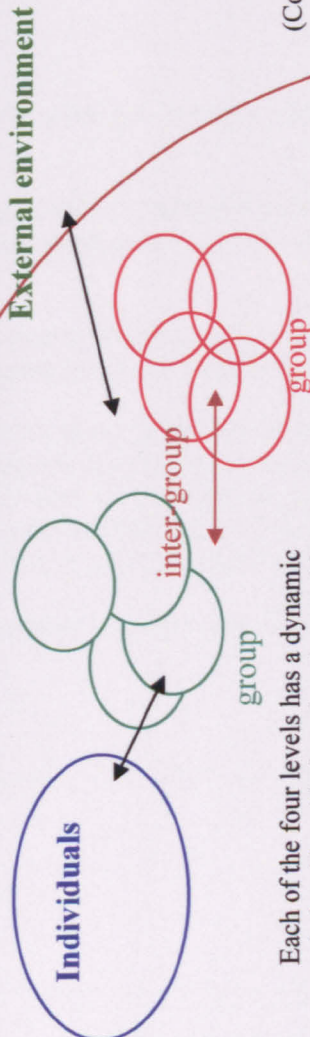


# ACTION RESEARCH AND RE-EDUCATION WITHIN AN ORGANISATION

Diagram 17

Patterns of interaction mutually influence one another. Change and learning depends on how people participate in terms of the organisation within the four levels of: individual, face-to-face, interdepartmental and the organisation and vice versa. These levels are not understood as echelon as in a chain of command but rather as a construct in organisational behaviour, that is, levels in terms of how people participate in organisations within these four levels.

The individual is the *bonding* relationship the individual has with the organisation and vice versa. The more complex approach to participation exists in establishing *effective working relationships in a face-to-face team* and then even more complex involvement is the *interdepartmental group* interface where teams have to be *co-ordinated* in order to achieve complex tasks and maintain a balance of power among competing interest groups. Coghlan believes that the most complex is the relationship of the *total organisation to its external environment* and so its key task is to *adapt* to environmental forces driving for change.



Each of the four levels has a dynamic relationship with the other three, with feedback loops forming a complex pattern of relationships. Therefore dysfunctions at any of the four levels can cause dysfunction at any of the other three

If a team is not functioning effectively then it can limit interdepartmental effectiveness and co-ordination thereby affecting the ability of the whole organisation.

A system must unlearn before it can relearn:

- Being motivated to change
- Changing
- Making the change survive and work

(Coghlan and Brannick, 2001)

Organisational levels are important dynamics in organisational politics, since political behaviour may be in individual, team and interdepartmental groups; individuals or groups may engage in covert or overt political behaviour to obtain more resources.

*Single loop/first order change:* deals with routine issues within an existing way of thinking  
*Double loop/second order change:* a change of thinking and adopting a different mental model – requires lateral thinking and questioning of and altering the core assumptions which underlie the situation.  
*Triple loop/Third order change:* occurs when complex attitudinal and cultural problems are addressed, which can actually be symptoms before problem resolution and organisational transformation can happen – developing and implementing new points of view and assumptions

Coghlan and Brannick point out that it is critical for an action researcher to inquire into those patterns and facilitate the group in surfacing and examining them, rather than making a private and untested interpretation. Thus taking what is directly observable into the realm of meaning does require skills in inquiry and intervention. There is a dynamic systemic relationship between individual bonding, team functioning, inter-group co-ordination and organisational adaptation which also impact and are critical to understand in the process of describing the need for change, defining the future state, assessing the present and managing the transition state. *The process of moving a change throughout the organisation requires a systemic view of the complex interrelationship and interdependence of the individual, face-to-face team, interdepartmental groups and the organisation.*

The idea of spirituality within the organisation was a difficult concept to understand. The research process continued to highlight, discover, uncover, and get at the tacit and implicit understanding which was emerging and unfolding constantly. It did feel like we were participating in an evolving, non-static and organically developing dance. Therefore to make visual and conceptual representation of our subtle and emerging knowing was helpful. What was emerging more and more is that spirituality has to do with “deep democracy”, socio-political awareness and embodied practice, which meant integrating body, mind and spirit, within our practice and structures. People “are” the organisation and our spiritual traditions are embodied in people and their context, not solely in ideas or doctrine. The individuals, groups and organisation embody the life structure, life style and values professed which also entails choices and decisions which are integrated and commensurate with what it is we say we are “living out” together. As we have seen our inner and outer lives need to be connected and integrated because the life and health of individuals, groups and the organisation is fundamental to healthy praxis and others can tell by the fruit. There is also an on-going interface between “theory and practice” within the interactive groups who meet quarterly in the “Development Group”, which itself leads to informed and integrated embodied practice being lived out in interdependence and interrelationship.

#### **b. Developing Spirituality within an Organisational Context: Critten**

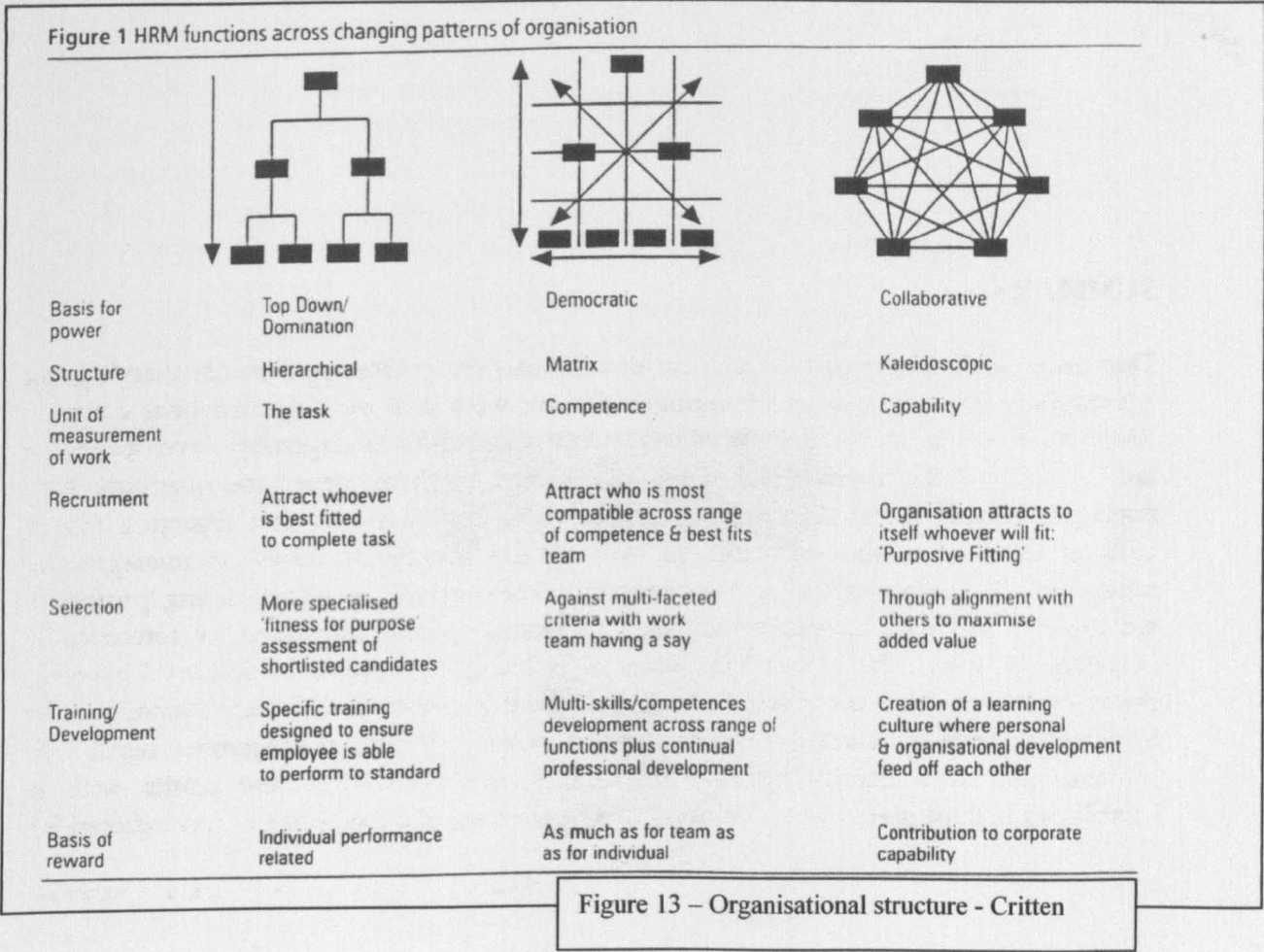
As stated in Phase Two, our research process had been well underway before I came upon “theory” for it which helped to “make sense of” what was happening within us individually, as a group and as an organisation. Critten suggested that instead of getting in outside consultants it is preferable to start where the energy is, that is, with a *pilot group*, of a few individuals who are committed, who are thinking beyond the present moment and who can then surface and codify knowledge which is thus grown out of the group as they move from personal positions to form propositions and action which is appropriate within the organisation. He suggests that the nature of change is subtle and happens through relationships in a non-hierarchical process, which can then increase capacity and potential from within by raising awareness, since the heart of all development is to move in relationship from things we don’t know to things that we do. In order to get innovation into a system there is a need for individuals to have capacity and capabilities they can share in “Action Research” through the team dynamic and also in collaborative discussion, through debate and dialogue, which leads them to see the

need for change, which is thus “with” people in this process of engagement, which then leads to more informed practice and development of grounded theories. Thus the underlying recognition is that it is not just an academic endeavour but begins with “where you are in it”, with an awareness that such personal development is more about being than doing and that there is a difference between change and transformation. The *context of the organisation* thus creates space where people can be heard, can challenge decisions made and can allow the testing of abilities which grow through this type of creative process where theory created can be lived out in reality. In that sense he believes that managers can’t control but are *context makers* who set the scene, give permission for people to be creative, recognising that the potential of people is key to the capacity of an organisation, not creating a structure based on their own image. The fruit of such a process is that people then are often more loyal to the organisation, living in covenantal relationships rather than in contracts with employer-employee.

Critten also helped us to describe and therefore name the organisational structure we were in fact “living within”. He explained a changing view of management based on *chaos and complexity theories*. Newtonian physics was the model for an ordered, stable universe of linear consequences, resulting in organisational structure as one with the basis of power as “Top-down domination”, that is, a hierarchical structure, in which the organisation recruits according to who best fits the task, attracting and selecting those best fit for purpose and task, who are then given specific training to ensure they are able to perform to standard. In contrast he suggests, with reference to Zohar, “Quantum Physics depicts a world of interconnected relationships where matter happens ‘by chance’ and at any time could be represented as waves or as particles.” Therefore there is no such thing as “certainty” and therefore non-linear systems “like organisations” can “flip” from one pattern to another, and so a concept of an organisation always seeking equilibrium is a myth. Obviously this understanding is a challenge for managers and requires a change of mind-set about what constitutes “organisations” and management within them. They must embrace a new way of looking at the world. Organisations are always on the edge of chaos, by definition and “At best, would be managers have to be content with an ability to nudge and push a system in a desired direction by shaping critical parameters that can influence the course of the systemic evolution.” Critten believes that we can then have a more creative approach to management with an infrastructure he calls, “*collaborative*”, where the structure is *kaleidoscopic*, with the unit of measurement being capability rather than the task; the organisation attracts



people who will fit “purposive fitting” and selection is made through alignment with others to maximise added value, and their training consists of the creation of a learning culture where personal and organisational development feed off each other, thereby making a contribution to corporate capability. (Critten, 1998) Critten’s understanding is depicted in his diagram below.



### Our application

In June 2002, near the end of our research project period the co-researchers had a discussion about how to actually continue to “develop” the vision. There was emphasis on the difference between theory and practice and that we still need to find models of Management structure which can facilitate such shared intent and ownership of the vision. Our research therefore continued to be imperative so we could then articulate the vision, in order to be able to own it and live it out together, which this report is also helping to do by putting in writing, the history and present foundational understanding for the sake of the future. Understanding facilitated through our on-going Participative Action Research highlighted the fact that such a need for change was both seen and

itself structured into the organisation. A brief summary from our discussion is included below.

- Developing the vision requires putting one foot in front of the other along with the Strategic Plan.
- We need to review how we interpret Tom and Faith's vision to free the oppression of disabled people.
- It is difficult to change how people think.
- The trustees meet infrequently and may not have the vision but can become informed by the DG and MG groups who can offer the views of the broader constituency.
- In that way all can become a home for the vision, which is a big heavy thing, which needs lots of help to carry it and a suitable Management Structure thus requiring "deep democracy".
- There is a difference between theory and practice, that is, between the trustees and staff "experience".
- We need to find models since this is also a need in society.
- Therefore this research is imperative to this understanding of the vision so it can be articulated in various ways.
- The suggestion is for an annual meeting to help shape the vision and ownership with the trustees, staff and volunteers.
- We also need constant pulse taking, monitoring, communication so that the vision isn't diluted and also adequate induction so new people can catch the vision.

12 June 2002 research group discussion about a "home for the vision".

### **c. Communities of Practice: an Interconnected System of Practices, Communities and Identities - Wenger**

We have considered how our research process facilitated change within the organisation and then gained some understanding about how organisations operate. Then we went on to discuss how organisational structures can be helpful for spirituality praxis and now we will consider what it means to be a "community of practice" within the organisation. Organisations are made up of people; people are the organisation. We have learned that developing a "spirituality praxis" has been a participative process in our *community of practice*, that is, our context for living spirituality. Together we created an environment of love and care. Through the research we wanted to ensure solid foundations and practice for the future of the organisation. Those interviewed have indicated that as a result of the research process a "community at Holton Lee" began to emerge and be identified. Therefore it is necessary to also have agreed theoretical underpinnings of what "community" means in our context, for all at Holton Lee to understand both now and in the future. Wenger outlined an understanding about community which helps us to



consider both a method to investigate spirituality along with guidelines to help embed it and live it.

Participation is an encompassing process of being active participants in the practice of communities, which shapes not only what we do but also who we are and how we interpret what we do in our communities of practice. Therefore learning helps us to refine practice and ensure new generations of members through individuals engaging in and contributing to the community and the organisation which can then become effective. Such communities are about knowing and about being together, living meaningfully and developing a satisfying identity, able then to take responsibility for their meaning, which happens through their participation in processing these meanings.

Membership in the community implies negotiated definition of what the community is about and competence is not about the ability to perform certain actions, possess certain information or mastery of certain skills but rather more about: *three dimensions that include:*

- 1) mutuality of engagement where people are able to establish relationships in which mutuality is the basis for an identity of participation.
- 2) there is accountability to the enterprise, where one is able to understand it deeply enough to take some responsibility for it and to contribute to its pursuit.
- 3) it requires enough participation in the history of its practice to recognise it in the practice and so requires the ability, both capability and legitimacy, to make this history newly meaningful.

This last point is particularly relevant because of our fifty-seven years long roots and history

He explains that because organisations are social designs there must be recognition that institutionalisation must be in the service of practice and that communities of practice are the locus of “real work” where the formal rests on the informal, where the visible counts on the invisible and where the official meets the everyday; “designing processes and policies is important but in the end it is practice that produces results, not the processes and policies.” So even though institutionalism is needed to hold the organisation together the converse is that excessive institutionalism can stall the organisation if the practices end up serving the institutional apparatus, rather than the other way around. Even when the existence of a community of practice is a response to

an institutional mandate, it is not the mandate that produces the practice; it is the community, so the tension between practice and institution needs a certain amount of free play between them. Integrative training focuses on practice, where building learning communities and training newcomers are twin and complementary goals, because learning is seen as a process of participation, with emphasis on learning rather than on teaching, by building opportunities offered by practice. Communities are engaged in the design of their practice as a place of learning and are given access to resources needed to negotiate relationships within the organisation and more broadly.

Wenger's theory complements and is relevant to the practice which emerged during our research process. He suggests five dimensions of organisational design for the learning community of practice which are resources to create a rhythm of engagement, imagination and alignment, suggesting that:

- i. *negotiation of meaning*, where the sustained history of practice becomes a resource for continuing the history and so people are able to engage in negotiation of meaning where every action calls upon a wealth of past interpretation and negotiation.
- ii. *the preservation and creation of knowledge* which is attuned to emerging needs can help to preserve the history as living practice, not just through books and databases and thus can ensure that the new generation of members can carry competence into the future, particularly when personal experiences and practice of competence interact closely; if the tension of that interaction is kept alive it produces new knowledge.
- iii. if experience and competence are marginalized, or a choice has to be made between them, or if they are seen as congruent when they are not, then productivity is lost and creation of knowledge is impaired. But by keeping the *tensions between experience and competence alive*, communities can create a dynamic form of continuity that preserves knowledge while keeping it current, taking responsibility for preserving old competencies and developing new ones, renewing concepts and fine tuning practices for new circumstances.
- iv. spreading and sharing of information happens with mutual accountability in interpersonal relationships, which are built up over time. As a result one piece of information acquired by one member then can quickly become everyone's and in this way communities of practice are *nodes of communication* for the dissemination, interpretation and use of information. Knowledge can thus

travel across the landscape naturally with complementary and overlapping forms of competence. However, this idea does require multi membership to be elevated to an organisational principle.

- v. *people make the difference* in an organisation because they know they can make a difference, so communities of practice place very specific focus on people. “We function best when the depth of our knowing is steeped in an identity of participation, that is, when we can contribute to shaping the communities that define us as knowers.”

Wenger states that if the goal of the organisation is aligned with learning, then it is critical that there is an allegiance of the participants which also in turn depends on the community of practice, in which their identity and practice is constituted. They constitute each other. The kind of personal investment and social energy required for creative work happens as participants are engaged. Therefore treating people as members of a community of practice does not mean stereotyping them but rather honouring the meaningfulness of their participation and valuing their membership as key to their ability to contribute to the competence of the organisation. This happens by offering an *institutional home* to the community of practice; they are key to its competence. An organisation then helps sustain the kinds of identity that allow participants to take active responsibility for some aspects of organisational learning. It is easy to overlook such a community as an asset and social fabric of learning organisations. Therefore an organisation’s ability to deepen and renew its learning thus depends on fostering or at least not impeding the formation, development and transformation of a community of practice, both old and new. (Wenger, 1999)

### ***Holton Lee’s application of each of the above dimensions***

- i. *Negotiation of meaning*: This research itself and “write up” was needed in order to name meaning within the history of practice, which had been sustained in an implicit manner for the past twelve years, so it could become a resource for building on the fifty-seven year old history. Then every subsequent action taken in the years to come can be built on the wealth of this past interpretation and relevant negotiation, otherwise it was in danger of being diluted, lost and increasingly out of tune with the founding vision.

- ii. *Preservation and creation of knowledge:* Subsequent to the research we have been more able then to match our organisational emerging needs with the named and agreed knowledge which had been both identified and more clearly preserved through the research process. Thus history has been preserved as living practice for the new generations of staff, trustees and volunteers so that they are now able to carry competence into the future in a relevant way. The past knowledge was resident within the founders but I am the only one of the initial founding group who continues to work within the organisation.
- iii. *Keeping the tensions between experience and competence alive:* We have been able to preserve knowledge by keeping the tensions between experience and competency alive, mainly through the recognition and support for this doctoral research. Therefore this new dynamic form of continuity is able to keep the knowledge current but also ensure it is in keeping with and in harmony with the old competencies. We can therefore develop new ones, by renewing founding concepts and principles and are thus able to fine tune current practice in our continually emerging circumstances as a new and still developing organisation. In particular this has meant being able to move from the founding “theology” and vision with its Christian roots in our present contemporary secular organisation, and now have a “theory of spirituality” which is consistent with and supportive of that founding theology.
- iv. *Nodes of communication:* Our research process identified the need for relationship and mutuality and interdependence which have now been built up over time, as we continued to move from the I to the we to the us within the organisation. It has been mainly through relationship that information has been identified, shared and disseminated as our increasingly shared knowledge travelled across our organisational landscape particularly in and through the new structure which thus recognised the “multi membership”, of the Development Group with its overlapping Four Aspect Groups interfacing significantly with the Trustees and Management Group.
- v. *People make the difference:* Various second and third person contributions have indicated that they experienced that they knew they could and have been able to make a difference to the organisation, which indicates that the organisation itself knows that “people make a difference” and they continue to be invited to participate mutually.

#### **d. Mini Societies - Handy**

In 1988 Charles Handy suggested that organisations are communities and mini-societies each with its own flavour and way of doing things and has identified four different styles based on the way the organisation works. They are:

- i. *The club culture* where the key to the whole organisation sits in the centre, like a spider's web, surrounded by ever widening circles of intimates and influence is with Zeus as the patron deity; a very personal ruler with a habit of direct interventions.
- ii. *The role culture* – is like a pyramid of boxes with a job title inside each box all joined together in logical and orderly fashion with the patron god Apollo, a god of harmony and rules and order where tradition, logic and rationality hold sway.
- iii. *The task culture* is like a net, which can pull its cords this way and that. It has an organisational form, which can respond to change in a less individualistic way than a club culture and more speedily than a role culture. There is a group and team of talents, which can be applied to a project, problem or task. Athena goddess of war and patron of the commando leader Odysseus is its deity, standing as she does for the task force and the problem-solver.
- iv. *The person culture* is represented by stars loosely grouped in a cluster or constellation, as an image of a person culture. The other three cultures put the organisation's purposes first then harness the individual to this purpose. The person culture puts the individual first and makes the organisation the resource for the individual's talents. Dionysus the god of wine and revels is its god as the most existential of gods, the one who puts the individual first.

Handy points out that accepting the difference between cultures is the first step to understanding since most organisations have a mix of cultures and as the organisation grows it is easy for the balance to get out of tune. Many organisations remain small and marginal rather than change their ethos and culture and can even fossilise in time. Therefore to keep the organisation relevant a new mixed culture needs to have Athenian projects and task cultures dotted throughout it. Rebalancing the mix of cultures is never easy he believes but always necessary. Wise organisations realise that their culture is never set in stone. (Handy, 1988: 85-102)



When asked which Management style and culture applies to Holton Lee, Tony wrote:

“We most represent the ‘task’ culture because we as a team draw key members to solve problems who then revert back to their main task; different teams pulling together out of the whole team depending on expertise e.g. Aspect Groups or Horse Show planning, Newsletter production, promotional material etc”

The co-researchers have stated that what we have learned is not set in tablets of stone and that spirituality has permeated the organisation and has been interwoven throughout as we continue to live in an ethos of empowerment and equality. Therefore the understanding is that our culture and ethos is underpinned by such a spiritual approach and praxis. Our structure reflects that of a collaborative and kaleidoscopic understanding of “management” along with the realisation that we are a “community of practice” where there is mutuality of engagement and participation as we live meaningfully together, recognising that “people are the organisation” and so help to shape it and make a difference, since they constitute each other.

## **vi. Context as Environment**

### **a. An Environment of Love – Lees**

As we have seen, living our spirituality happens within a context and it is important to understand our motives for wanting to “live” it. Holton Lee’s vision and spirituality go beyond concepts and are therefore difficult to describe with rational, logical and objective understanding. It is about a “quality of life” in an environment of love. We can be reformed by the power of love, which goes beyond a human point of view and normal behaviour in our giving. Such love and compassion is taught and demonstrated by our way of life. The vision, which Faith kept emphasising, is to create an environment of love, faith and hope, which requires us to be active and full participants in relationship with it. It is therefore very costly since the environment we create between us can either be loving or critical depending on our relationships. Our communication is not only through talking but in loving, where feelings and thoughts are integrated, thereby embodying the vision so others experience this tangible nature of love. Without this integration people misunderstand and fall in the gap between what we say and what we live out. She added that, then, we can stand up for justice and peace and help to re-establish a society which is capable of supporting such a healthy

loving environment particularly since our age is a crisis with few models in society and so it needs people who actually are what they are talking about and so can help to shape new structures. It is hard to take someone where you have not dared to go yourself and reminded us that we need to count the cost before we start on such a shared vision. Such a shared vision is not static but grows as do those involved, in an on-going process organically. She also reminded us that we can end up with a great difference between the initial hope because much of the original inspiration has become frozen into ordinary structures which cannot manage to move the vision forward. Therefore it is very important to go back to the original spirit so that same quality of life can re-emerge. Living a vision requires unity of movement, action and change on the journey together. This re-creative power of love sees the beauty and potential with an inner eye, wanting the best for others. This loving does not happen through theory but only in the authority of our own real experience. (Lees, 1987)

#### **b. A Conducive Environment - Parffrey**

An organisation is fundamentally an interpersonal context and therefore “leading” is about relationships and is concerned with and affects the entire well being of the organisation. Parffrey explains that an understanding of love, both in theology and the secular world of psychology, includes respect, genuineness, empathy and not hiding behind a mask of authority or power, but instead walking and feeling “with” people in empathy, nourishing them by promoting self-esteem, dignity, security, collaboration and motivation, which includes both care of the individual and care for the organisation. We have outlined a relevant organisational structure in which an understanding of leadership is important. Parffrey added to our understanding saying that such leadership is the child of the community created by a nexus of relationships, functioning like a beehive with interdependency and each holding the vision. The organisation’s central task then is to develop a process of *mutual leadership*, designed around these key features of “leadership by the Spirit” which means not “doing to” others through social engineering, manipulating conditions and indoctrination, but instead setting a climate to create opportunities to share meanings. With this understanding there is total integration of ourselves, as we lead with integrity, honestly matching words and feelings with thoughts and actions. Thus the starting point for change, is not system change, not change in others, but change in ourselves, requiring us to acknowledge our part in the situation, not to blame others, but to bring about change in our own hearts, *creating a*

*climate* and conditions for others to learn, grow and to be enabled with mutual interpersonal relationships which are at the heart of praxis.

These perceptions perhaps are challenges to established thinking because it requires whole person learning, not merely intellectual and includes the emotional, artistic and spiritual in a holistic learning, a spiritual learning and whole person learning is where souls are touched and people are able to explore meaning in their attempts to discover the life of the soul. Parffrey suggests that we need to move away from thinking of *leadership* as something embodied in a person, within a structure and “done to” others but rather to see it as a process and a product of a complex nexus of interpersonal relationships; its very shape is constructed by the shapes and perspectives of those within the nexus. Current predominant models of leadership are the result of sophisticated social engineering and the determinist, positivist paradigm where characteristics of good leadership are identified within the individual, who is selected as leader. This new conceptualisation does present a challenge because it is not a mere shift or adjustment to previous thinking but requires a “massive, transformative, discontinuous leap to a different place” so that layers of “truth” are turned upside down so what was below is now above and seen and what was considered trivial or unimportant is now thrust into the centre of thinking, admitting the language of spirituality. Such a transformation in thinking will not be particularly easy since old ways are so entrenched in Western philosophy, which predicated on the objectivisation of people, structures, systems and knowledge and where the focus of attention is on the individual person. In contrast in Eastern philosophy things happen and have meaning in relationship with one another, are shaped and co-defined by each other, with a natural reciprocity and interdependence and thinking, which is essentially relational and holistic, although postmodernism is chipping away at the predominant thought-forms of the West but practice always post-dates underpinning values by many years.

As indicated in our research journey and data much of these theoretical proposals have been embodied in our praxis, in our community of practice. The new flat infrastructure is one in which we share power and Tony enables a mutuality and empowering in what Stephen Covey describes as “*leadership by the Spirit*, which is concerned with principles and values revolving around the clarification of meaning and is concerned with the whole person”. This understanding also has roots in Holton Lee’s foundation as described by Sir Tom in Chapter Three as an “upside down leadership” with an inverted

pyramid. A “spirituality of management” touches souls and explores meanings but therefore does require new concepts, language and meanings which Parffrey describes as nine waymarkers: Journey, reflective cycle, community, vision, values, integrity, relationship, love and risk. This list of waymarkers reflects elements and ingredients of our own journey. (Parffrey, web)

***Key points learned in the research about the organisation as context***

- It was not only a business thing therefore spirituality is woven throughout the organisation. It is now radical in its set-up with a sound and helpful foundation as a result of the research process.
- People need to spend time within the place and organisation in order to understand it at heart level, since spirituality is lived out in loving relationships and so is precious and fragile within the organisation.
- All within our secular organisation with its sense of community need to recognise spirituality as our sense of identity.
- The business aspect of our spirituality group meetings were difficult initially.
- Spirituality is manifest by being in relationships, so the organisation can help provide an environment to facilitate people to live in a healthy way but we can't organise or ensure spirituality.
- Those who visit will tell us if what they experience is not the same as what we say.
- We need to recognise our motives for developing spirituality praxis so not to be part of a bandwagon.
- Without the research there may have been greater disintegration within the organisation. We all had different spiritual backgrounds, but are now cutting ground and on track with other groups around the world and stretching boundaries re spirituality.
- If the organisation isn't acting respectably then there isn't integrity or integration.
- It takes a long time to work through a very solid and enabling vision, which is itself incredibly strong since guests still feel it today.
- No doubt if we had not engaged in the research we wouldn't have such a good base for building the future; it wouldn't be well thought through.
- This shared process has resulted in a “community of us” and in the process we realised as an organisation that we need a wide range of thinking with respect for where people are at so we can learn from each other.
- We learned from and were challenged by your questions and thus we were made to think. We started learning from “the bottom-up” and worked our way up rather than starting from the “top-down”.
- A research impact is that lives have changed since we realised change happens not by “telling” people what “you” know but by helping them expand, grow and open up.
- God is in the place and we meet God in different ways, wherever care and love is given, in the care of land and people.



- In the research process we built a foundation and base to work from and so now we know where we are coming from as a group but it took a long time to grow and build together. Now we can put it into practice.
- The vision needs to be picked up otherwise it could just be a centre run without the ethos and its own long background.
- It is seeing everyone as important and being inclusive of all people within a place which is also fully accessible.

I will now, very briefly, outline some theory for the remaining three Phases of the Model, building on what was stated about each of them in Chapter Four, including consideration of the Social Aspect of the model.

### **Phase Three: Language and Words**

The complexity of understanding the “words” we each used to talk about “spirituality” during our research process led to highlighting it as a Phase of the emerging model. Words were limited and limiting as we attempted to share our knowing, believing, experiences and emerging understanding, particularly since spirituality refers to the more subtle dimensions of awareness. Soelle adds that our dominant culture restricts our language and capacity for speech and that “theological language” has been stripped of integrative qualities so expresses itself in a void of consciousness, empty of emotion and insensitive to human experience and therefore is ghost-like. She suggests that now we need to seek non-authoritarian, non-patriarchal language to describe a God whose attributes are not those of distance, power and domination. We need a language which takes our emotions seriously because when experiences of God break through our existing limitations of human comprehension it is difficult to communicate these experiences, in fact, “... it is impossible to speak of what lies beyond the capabilities of speech – yet we feel compelled to speak of it.” Then the language we use may be paradoxical or may lead to silence. In our century we no longer have a language to describe our experience as we did in the fourteenth century. (Soelle, 1984: 80-90)

Thomas Merton also felt that the tyranny of the mind and power in our Western cultures suppresses the genuine spirituality and life-affirming integration of our imagination and the “meaning generating capacity of words and silence” which are so integral to other cultures. (Higgins and Letson, 1998:56) Soelle believes that language in the meantime constitutes a prison because we continue to experience a “paternalistic dominant exclusion” since some people have no language at all to describe their most important experiences. Therefore she suggests that rather than working from established deductive



theological principles we begin with experience and thus rediscover a “new language” and new theological methodology with the “story” of human being and their experience. However, this won’t happen by simply substituting another dominant exclusive language but instead “language” itself has to be turned on its head before we can even grasp what the problem is. The creative use of language allows us then to immerse ourselves in God in Love or talk about God as the fundament, love, depths, sea and symbols of nature which instead indicate a “relationship” of unity and sense of belonging, changing the image of God from a power-dispensing father to a liberating, unifying force where we cease to be “objects” and are instead “subjects”. (Soelle, 1984: 80-90) Holloway adds that the role of speech used to convey and interpret “spirituality” is a paradox and that “words” have a provisional revisable character, as a vehicle which thus makes “theology precarious” since the words we use can be projections of our own fear and insecurity rather than a sanctifying experience of God. (Holloway, 1997)

### **Phase Six: Transformation**

Faith Lees wrote that in order to love unconditionally we first need to know God’s peace at the centre of our own being, so that space and freedom replace fear and anger and then we can look outwards to helping others. This type of renewal and change requires us then to break down our own barriers. (Lees, 1982) Ruumet tells us that psychospiritual integration requires us to move from the hierarchical and dualistic perspectives, not along a linear path but rather a circular spiral path, leaving maps behind as we turn our hearts in the direction of love. “Changing the world means changing ourselves” in a journey where each step taken towards the Divine is also taken with the fullest human development because there is an inter-dependence between the spiritual, psychological and physical dimensions of our lives which grow in tandem. An integrated approach includes body, mind and spirit and a change of consciousness not mere re-alignment and then we are more able to live a holistic spirituality. (Ruumet, 1997)

### **Phase Seven: Relationships**

In the research data “relationship” was emphasised as fundamental to spirituality praxis. Quantum Science supports this awareness by telling us that we are physically interwoven and are stitches of the same fabric. Thus we live in interrelationship and

connection throughout the whole of our personal and societal lives and so are both affected by our contexts and affect them; there is a connection between the large and small. (Zohar, 1991) Johnson tells us that we can transform relationships in society through revitalising spiritual energy, thus empowering a “transformative praxis” toward a fulfilling future for all. Thus those who are oppressed can be “empowered” with a sense of human dignity and self-hood, able then to live in free and caring relationships in mature spirituality, thus fostering connectedness and solidarity because their self-respect has been enhanced. In this way we can establish a wise order of relationship in the world. (Johnson, 1998) Faith Lees believed that we need the strength of relationships which show love in reality and then we can rely more on the words we speak to each other. (Lees, 1982)

### **Social Aspect of the Model**

The Model which emerged during our research, which helps to understand and develop spirituality praxis, shows that there is also a “Social” aspect, ethic and life to consider and that our inner and outer lives are connected. In fact, inner and outer knowing and change can’t be separated and requires a journey at both individual and social levels. This work requires us to come to terms with our “shadow” and learn to accept what is within. (Lorimer, 1998) Healing must first take place at inner and outer, personal and transpersonal, individual and collective, social and spiritual, private and planetary levels so we can live in mutuality. Then we can change from adapting to oppressive social systems and live instead with connection, compassion, community and co-operation. (Greenspan, 1993) As we take time for our “spiritual work” using self-reflective consciousness and discernment, with awareness of what is going on both within and outside of ourselves, our understanding evolves into a greater awareness of the world. (O’Murchu, 2002)

Faith Lees stated that holiness and social-action are both pre-requisites for each other and we need to move beyond parochial or national concerns and address the globalisation of all the challenges, of war, chaos and self-destruction. We need a belief in human dignity, basic human rights, to know the value of justice, freedom, peace and mutual respect, in love, generosity and reason, rather than in force. We need new structures and rearrangement of international relations (Lees, 1982) Johnston wrote that millions of people can no longer separate themselves from the harrowing problems of

peace and justice, ecology, violence and racism so are searching for a new mysticism recognising problems aren't solved at "mind" level but at the level of the spirit which will lead us to profound "wisdom". Even though each religion has its own scriptures their common goal is the same, which is a challenge to institutional religions. (Johnston, 2000)

Neal et al point out that individuals, organisations and society must all transform. Organisations have to move away from increased competitiveness and society must change from living with environmental degradation, shifts in economic power, inequalities in distribution of wealth and unsolved social problems such as discrimination. They believe that theories of chaos and self-organisation can provide new ways to model the non-linear, complex behaviour of dynamic systems. They suggest the *transformational paradigm* assumes that everything is connected, the whole organises the parts and that harmony and integration follow alignment with life. Global capitalism in the current era must consider problems of distribution, equity, natural and person-centred beauty; a new paradigm would consider social responsibility and serve the social good rather than market shares as the bottom line. They point out that when enough individuals and organisations shift to the new paradigm there is greater likelihood that society will transform as well. (Neal et al, 2000:5-14) Small pockets of people who can humbly advocate a "true integral spirituality" by example and liberation are those who have experienced a radical and "authentic transformation" at the deepest seat of consciousness itself. (Wilber, 1997)

## Summary

The non-linear characteristics, experience and impact of this research are difficult to measure and "write up" since were researching the "spiritual" aspect of life, referred to as the Four-fold perspective outlined by Gerry Hughes with a connection of: the *intra-personal*, which is our personal relationship with God; the *inter-personal* which includes our relationships with our own immediate circle; the *social*, in which we look at our own attitudes, values and prejudices and the fourth is *environmental* which concerns our relationship with all of creation, not only human beings, leading us to become more aware of the whole ecosystem on which we and all future generations of living things depend. (Hughes, 2002)

Biberman and Whitty explain that The *Modern Paradigm* based on the Mechanistic Paradigm with rigid bureaucratic structures and hierarchal chains of command, is one of toxic stress and inequity in the name of profit; it values rationality and logic, with rigid beliefs and set patterns and rules. However, through the process of deep learning and transformation in the research process, we have begun to move, individually and as an organisation, to the *Spiritual Paradigm*, which, they explain has flatter structures and greater openness to change and greater interconnection between organisational units and empowerment of workers at all levels. They are then more open to change, relying more on intuition and emotions, with more overt spiritual practices, working more in mutual relationships, appreciating team work, relationship and interconnectedness with all aspects of life. (Biberman and Whitty, 2000: xxi-xx-iii) Tony indicated in his interview and writing that the research process further facilitated both his understanding and implementation of such spiritual values within our organisational culture. He also linked and compared issues associated with economic performance and the development of individual attitudes and potential as people continue to search for meaning within the organisation and in their lives, saying that if people are trusted, respected and valued for the part they play, they change and grow and in this way the vision is being lived out. People are thus motivated to take ownership, responsibility and to contribute to shaping the vision and organisational effectiveness and so want to stay. These are spiritual values being lived out. This basic workplace spirituality is our common ground. As Liz also pointed out, in her interview, spirituality undergirds all that we do and Tony stated that spirituality has permeated and been interwoven throughout the whole organisation. The model which has emerged from our research can be a model which can be applied in any other field or discipline. (See Chapter Seven) It has emerged from within the new academic field and discipline of spirituality. It is personal and socio-political and therefore challenging because it suggests that deep transformative journeys need to be taken by individuals, organisations and societies who are committed to spiritual praxis. The change and commitment required is costly but to the degree that it is taken and lived is the degree, to which authentic spirituality can be practiced and lived within various contexts, informed by grounded theory.

However, there is a caution pointed out in the reader saying that the required change and transformation is challenging because it can open shadows, pathologies, addictions or old wounds which then may not be able to be dealt with appropriately in the workplace or Business Management School. (Bibberman & Whitty, 2000)

## **Chapter Seven:**

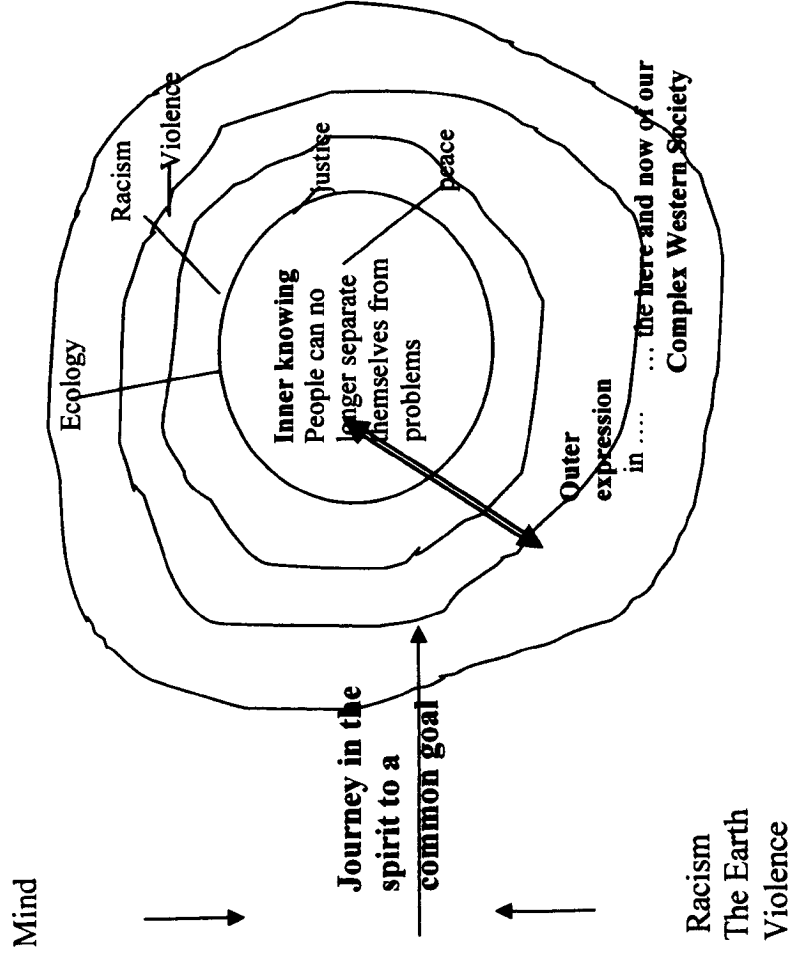
### **GUIDELINES FOR EMBEDDING SPIRITUALITY IN ORGANISATIONS**

In Chapter Six we considered the movement around the eight phases of the Model for understanding and developing spirituality praxis, learning what was implied in our process which offers a framework for understanding and developing spirituality. The cycle is on-going as life is, and movement continues towards growth, change and congruency. The additional guidelines proposed here for embedding spirituality in organisations are not formulas or techniques written in tablets of stone but are rather reflections and theoretical underpinnings in support of what we have experienced and learned, not only in our own research experience but from the voices of others who live spirituality. The guidelines provide theoretical underpinnings for “good practice”, indicating what “loving conduct” is, in personal, organisational, societal and global environments. Spirituality praxis and accountability cannot be separated and have to do with justice and peace, with connecting our inner and outer spirituality, so we can live an authentic spiritual life, with renewed hearts, not based on power “over” others, as we continue to make our home in our complex society. See in diagram 18 below:

*“Connecting Inner and Outer Spirituality in Our Spiritual Search and Journey”*



## CONNECTING INNER AND OUTER SPIRITUALITY IN OUR SPIRITUAL SEARCH AND JOURNEY



These problems can only be solved at the level of Spirit not of the mind. The goal of each religion is the same so we can join hands in this journey toward a common goal and so experience unity in diversity. A challenge to the institutional religions. (Johnston, 2000:84)

- We must integrate our inner knowing and outer expression and find ways to live the spiritual journey fully. Spiritual fulfilment and freedom includes compassion and is born in patience and love which grows through the wisdom of the larger community; it is not born of oneself.
- The authentic spiritual life must be fulfilled here and now in the place we live, as we continue to mature in the cycles of the spiritual life on our inner spiritual journey.
- As we look into the mind and heart we discover they hold and encompass our whole world and vast regions of consciousness.
- The few who claim spiritual perfection have often created the most power-centred and destructive communities.
- It is not enough to recognise spiritual longing but our hearts need to be renewed so we need a trustworthy discipline to carry us on the journey not to “fix” ourselves, but in order to see who we really are.

(Kornfield, 2000)

The guidelines outlined below are in summary form and a more extended version is in the Appendix number 17.

1. Continuing research and study
2. Good teachers for the journey
3. Use of words and language
4. Organisational systems
5. Spiritual rhythm, disciplines and spiritual practice
6. Accountability
7. Common Global Vision
8. Guidelines for practising a transformational spirituality
9. Diversity, discrimination and equal opportunity
10. A new vision for life – genuine and revolutionary mysticism and community
11. Spirituality applied and practiced – orthopraxis in the face of globalisation
12. Genuine change – Evolutionary spirituality
13. Living spirituality in practice
14. On-going discernment process
15. A framework for spirituality of organisational renewal and suggestions on how to maintain on-going good practice
16. The Pastoral Cycle
17. On-going Spiritual development and fruits

### **1. Continuing Research and Study**

It is important to recognise the overall importance of “study” within the field of spirituality, particularly since loving conduct is concrete because it includes both meeting needs or problems and also addressing the causes of these needs and problems if they are to be eliminated. The study of systems and issues is essential otherwise the practice risks shallowness or counter productiveness. Traditional methods of research are proving dissatisfying and it is no longer appropriate for theologians to analyse objectively from within universities but rather the pastoral ambience provides raw material. People may be caught up in their enthusiasm about spirituality without making connections in their own experience and it can become psychologised and secularised,

therefore credentials may be needed. (Noffke, 1993) (Tosey, web paper) (O'Murchu, 2000)

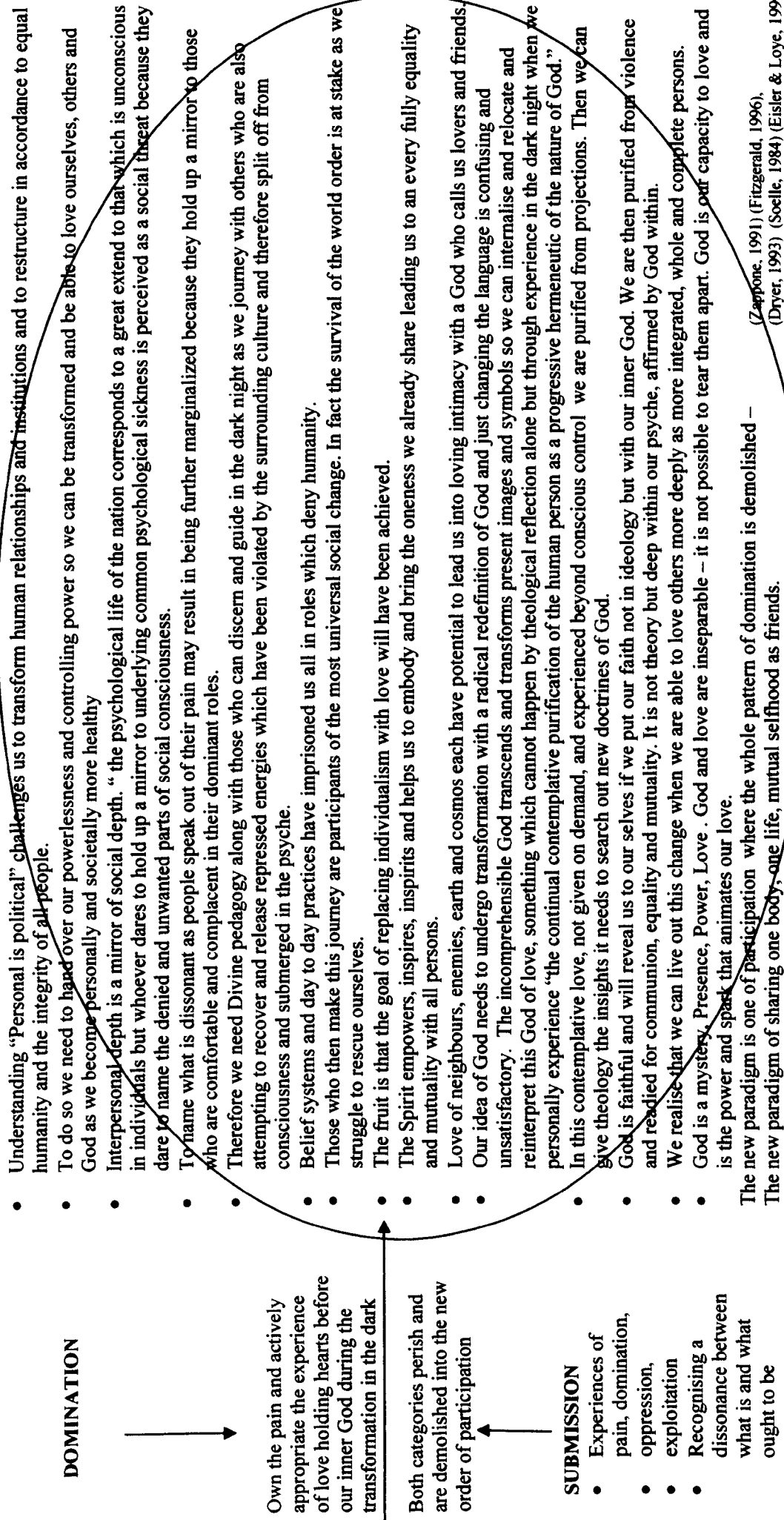
## **2. Good Teachers for the Journey**

They are people who can speak from their own intrinsic authority and are able to create the kind of theological living-space we need for our search for meaning. Because they speak from their own pain and passion for truth they can then make the journey “with” others, knowing that the Spirit ultimately produces the growth we hope to facilitate.

Understanding that personal is political challenges us to transform human relationships and institutions and the fruit of growth is that we are able to live in mutual participation with all persons, the earth, cosmos and God as diagram 19 on the next page, “*Attributes for the Journey*” depicts.

## ATTRIBUTES OF THE JOURNEY

Diagram 19



We will know by our resultant behaviour if we indeed are living an “integrating spirituality” because it enables us to create new politics and generate new social structures helping to restore the whole fabric of life. There will be congruence between our inner and outer life and ethic; our love will be connected to justice as we live in a paradigm of power with the mutual empowerment of love “with” others. (Holloway, 1997) (Au, 1995) (Ruffing, 1993)

### **3. Use of Words and Language**

Refer to the discussion in Chapter Four page 47 and in Chapter Six page 216.

### **4. Organisational Systems**

Bishop Holloway states that feuds are focused on organisational systems competing for exclusive divine approval. The main opportunities of the public and political aspects of our lives are provided by the people we live and work with where systems that cause poverty have to be challenged and changed. Thus we need some sort of spiritual rhythm in our lives with the goal of formation being compassion and loving-kindness. We are called to advocacy and solidarity with those who live on the margins which may then lead us to conflict and collision with powerful institutions of the spiritual (Church) as well as the political (State) when they organise themselves against the “weak”. (Holloway, 1997) As was made clear in Chapter Six, we can learn much from wider literature on organisations. (E.g. Wenger, Handy, Critten and Coghlan etc.)

### **5. Spiritual Rhythm, Disciplines and Practice**

Our practice must be in freedom from the ego through love, compassion, respect and truth; the effort to transform ourselves spiritually makes us genuine religious practitioners. God is a matter of experience and it is in the soul of the whole person a reconciliation needs to take place so that there can be purposive action without self-centredness, individuality without egoism, and oneness with the all without loss of uniqueness. (Ravindra, 2000) The founders of all major religions demonstrate a concern for helping others, since each conducted themselves with great simplicity, ethical disciplines and love for all as the hallmark of their lives. Their teachings all place special emphasis on developing love and compassion and renouncing selfish desires, calling on us to transform our hearts and minds. Simply relying on faith without implementation is of limited value. Instead the efforts that we make sincerely to transform ourselves spiritually are what make us genuine religious practitioners; until



we put our own spiritual teachings into practice we will never be taken seriously. We don't need complicated dogmas but rather the doctrine is compassion, love and respect acting out of concern for others and as we do this step by step, we will gradually reorder our habits and attitudes and think more of others. (Tenzin Gyatso, The Dali Lama, 1999) "Loving does not come from human effort alone. It cannot be programmed ... it is essentially a religious phenomenon. Indeed, it is the very core and centre of all authentic religion." (Johnston, 2000)

## **6. Accountability**

The ultimate goal is not to remove the burden from the oppressed but to change the very hearts and minds of the oppressor which represents unlimited and unconditional love. (Templeton, 1999) Our accountability is to the world, which is battered and bruised by forces of patriarchy and we are accountable when we are attuned to movements of the Spirit at work in the world, with a priority of a relational and co-operative mode. Everything is interconnected and interrelated so we need to discard a dualistic construction of the "sacred and secular" as people move into a space, which seeks to transcend the narrow and ideological confines of the religion of power and fear. (O'Murchu, 2000) "Accountability" includes the weak being able to move from impotence to power where they are able to move then from an unconscious, unsuspecting tolerated impotence, using practical existential steps, which includes confronting their life-threatening power. (Soelle, 2001)

## **7. Common Global Vision: *Transformation of society, culture and consciousness***

"Globalisation is premised on the promise that the poor may become a little less poor if only the rich become immeasurably, abusively richer: if it had been the intention of humanity to wreck the Earth, no more effective formula could have been imagined" Therefore there is a need to distribute justice and allocate resources. (Seabrook, 2002) The implications of increased spiritual awareness, embracing values such as empowerment, participation, inclusiveness and sustainable development, within our environment, have social, political and financial consequences. (O'Murchu, 2000)

## **8. Guidelines for Practising a "Transformational Spirituality"**

The transformations of society, culture and consciousness have deep repercussions on the role of religion and spirituality; in fact, a rightly understood and practised spirituality might give direction and meaning to these transformations. In 1937 Pierre

Teilhard de Chardin wrote that “phenomenon of spirituality” could provide the deepest energy resources for human action and community, for building the spirit of one earth, a new “mysticism of action” and new holistic spirituality, which works in and through all human realities, rather than apart from them. It is a *transformational spirituality* commensurate with a cosmos, which itself is in spiritual transformation, wherein personal, social and global developments are not seen as apart, but as closely interdependent. His understanding of spirituality as “transformative spirit in action” provides a new paradigm for the practice of spirituality in contemporary culture and in the world at large. The search for new forms of spirituality which integrate action and contemplation, social and personal worlds, outward and inward is a search which one also finds articulated elsewhere, for instance, within womens’ spirituality, ecology, peace or artistic movements. We need a “common vision” of what we want the world to be so that we can shape it and arrive at a greater equity and balance between spiritual and material needs. Seeking spiritual formation and following a spiritual discipline is necessary, but not sufficient for the spirituality of the future. Spirituality must permeate the personal and political, it must animate our thought, action and imagination so that we can work for the transformation of the whole world and all life within it. There is an urgent need to work for a broader development of spiritual awareness and sensibility among all peoples. Only a transformed action-orientated spirituality can respond to the hope and agonies of our suffering world. (King, 1992)

### **9. Diversity and Discrimination and Equal Opportunity**

Diversity is a means of combating discrimination, imbalance, injustice, under-representation or exclusion where underlying reasons are addressed and tackled so that discriminatory barriers are got rid of. However it is in danger of being exploited as a strategy with the “popular perception” which results in it being tokenism, faddish and pragmatic and therefore cannot result in actual change with an accompanying drive towards equality. “Equality” needs to be replaced because otherwise an institution need not fundamentally change the way it functions as long as it changes how it looks. Therefore underlying issues and reasons for injustice need to change as we face them and learn from them. Our safeguard at Holton Lee is that those who visit quickly reflect back to us any discrepancies or whether they experience any sort of discrimination. We have had to learn that to live out what we say about equality means making a difference by allowing people to be who they are, within an environment that encourages growth and fulfilment of potential. Younge believes then that in so doing we radically alter the

“institution” that previously excluded people who felt marginalized, which is what we have done, to some degree, through this research process by gaining more understanding for our practice or orthopraxis. (Younge, 2002)

### **10. A New Vision for life – Genuine and Revolutionary Mysticism and Community**

“Mysticism and community exist in complex tension with one another.” (Soelle, 2001) The World Summit in 2002 indicated that many businesses and corporations weren’t willing to address the gap between the rich and poor so therefore there remains a question of ethics, basic human rights and the environment. (World Summit web site, 2001) Therefore the rich get richer at the expense of the poor. (Brown, 2002) However, “genuine mysticism” is understood as revolutionary mysticism which goes out into the ongoing creation of the world in which we participate. “Being-in-God” cannot be privately appropriated and enshrined into the purely “personal” happening because isolating the individual is intolerable to mystical thinking. Humans who have no thought of God have fallen asleep and live in a prison, which is determined by two trends that match perfectly, that is globalisation and individualisation. The *globalised* economic order coerces people to produce more at more speed and profit for about 20% of humankind. One of the “spiritual difficulties” is the inner connection between globalisation and individualization, because the more globally the market economy structures itself, the less interest it demonstrates in the social and ecological webs in which humans live and the more it requires of the individual who is without any relation whatsoever. Relenting *individualisation* has no attachment to our fellow creatures. (Soelle, 2001) Monbiot states that some companies with “corporate social responsibility” seem to be saying one thing and doing just the opposite; corporations will take what they can because when there is a conflict between profitability and the environment and human rights, the profits come first. (Monbiot, 2002) We need a “*new vision of our life together*”, with groups who are committed to critical openness, voluntary effort and who can be bearers of hope as carriers of resistance because they employ a different interest than consumerism. (Soelle, 2001) The challenge then to all businesses must be one of ethics, basic human and environmental rights and “good practice”, with corporate accountability and social and environmental responsibility.

## **11. Spirituality Applied and Practised - Orthopraxis in the Face of Globalisation and Repression**

In liberation Theology, liberation (redemption) is what sets us free from economic, political, cultural and spiritual oppression. Liberating movements express themselves in numerous changes in the practice and teaching of religion. Four principles, in brief, are those of: orthopraxis, recognising the poor are teachers, uncovering the causes and standing up for justice and human rights (Soelle, 2001) The symptoms of our current disease result from a mechanistic view of the universe where we seek to control the world and nature with resulting threat of planetary destruction. The ancient world view was of the integrated whole of the physical, psychological and spiritual worlds, interrelated and integrated to form a unity. A new state of consciousness with a higher knowledge of direct experience of the indwelling Spirit of God can bring about a transformation where dualities are transcended. Modern physics tells us that the whole universe has to undergo a radical transformation and that we are in a continuous process of transformation. As our consciousness develops we will learn how to integrate our rational mind and ego-consciousness into our personal being, thus becoming more of ourselves, able to enter more deeply into relationships with others, in a communion of love. We emerge through all the levels of consciousness, the physical, vital, emotional, imaginative, rational, and transrational until we reach a fully differentiated unity of inter-personal relationship which recalls the description of the universe in what modern physics refers to as a “complicated web of interdependent relationships.” (Griffiths, 1998) A psychological revolution is required so that we can all develop a humanely empowering vision because inauthentic distortions in relationships have an unequal distribution of power, which is not overcome, with a reversal of power and further polarisation. (King, 1995)

A theology which holds on to the dignity and human rights of the destitute in the face of the globalisation of the markets is a “Mysticism of liberation” which makes no distinction between movements associated with churches and secular movements. Everything that exists coexists and is bound up into a network of relationships that we call interdependence and coexistence. Love overcomes illusions of autonomy, self-sufficiency and the praxis of exclusion which is already the hope of self-aware minorities. Buber saw that a bigger mystical task is to remain in the world and yet to resist, within the world, the urge to possess both things and power, living with a “true democratic mysticism” of everyday life, taking responsibility for everything that insults

the sense of equality and justice, where the causes of war in ourselves are also opposed. (Soelle, 2001) At Holton Lee we work to address underlying causes particularly of oppression of disabled people and to be mutually inclusive of all people recognising we are not autonomous or self-sufficient but rather we realise our inter-dependency.

## **12. Genuine Change - Evolutionary Spirituality**

happens when we are thrown into a process of genuine change and transformation, often through feeling powerless, having to move from the old to the new paradigm at either personal, group, societal, national or international levels. Such an impasse is the condition for transformation as we surrender to it in a contemplative love experience, which is beyond conscious control and not given on demand. This experience can give to theology the insights it needs to search out a new doctrine of God which is related to the intellectual, practical and ethical concerns of the present situation of all oppressed groups, which suggests transformation and emancipative possibilities for the future. People can express their rage and anger, which can purify the “abused consciousness”, of all the repressed possibilities and “lost alternatives”, in compassion with all those who cry for liberation. This is an experience not a theory. In the dark night the person is affirmed by the God within; it is not a validation of things as they are or a ploy to keep people contented as “outcasts of the [patriarchal] land.” Rather there is an affirmation of the self that comes from deep inside with a consequent maturing to wholeness as a complete person along with a new and “integrating spirituality” capable of creating new bodies and generating new social structures. (Fitzgerald, 1996:410-429)

## **13. Living Spirituality in Practice**

We tend to equate our holy thoughts, aspirations and our ability to discuss religious and moral questions with actual advancement in the spiritual life. We little realise how far behind our noble protestations lags our actual performance. (Dubay, 2002) What is love and how do we attain a quality of love? It arises in the human heart and yet “anything you do will only make it forced, cultivated and therefore phoney, for love cannot be forced. There is nothing you can do.” Freedom is another word for love. It happens when we stop discriminating, don’t ask for anything in return, are unselfconscious and love in freedom; love dies in the moment of coercion, control or conflict. Love means being sensitive to life, things, persons, to the exclusion of nothing, no one; this Love is already within us and only requires us to remove the blocks so it can surface. Love born of sensitivity doesn’t respond to prefabricated *guidelines* and principles but rather to



concrete reality; if we have an awareness of self and other we will know what love is. We have to drop the control which the concepts, categories, prejudices, projections, needs, attachments and labels; we have drawn from our conditioning and past experiences, have over us. This includes dropping the control society exercises over us, with its tentacles, which have penetrated to the very roots of our being, because they prevent us from loving. What will save the world is not goodwill but a change in our thinking, otherwise, we respond to principles, ideologies and economic, political, religious and psychological belief-systems as well as to preconceived ideas and prejudices. Our thinking is often contaminated by fear, desire and self-interest, consciously or unconsciously. We don't need doctrinal formulations, methods, techniques, spiritual exercises or formulas but rather hearts that are divested of programming because spirituality isn't lived by a practice of techniques but by being a certain kind of person which is not achieved through efforts or techniques. It is not a commodity you can buy; what matters is what you are, what you become. (De Mello, 1993)

#### **14. On-going Discernment Process**

David Coghlan explains that *first person inquiry* and practice is done on one's own inquiry into the events of one's own daily life, with awareness and purpose. It has to do with how we are in the world, how our spiritual development occurs in the events of everyday life as we attend to experience, make judgements and take responsibility for actions taken. Reflection on experience, judgement and action take place within the context of a growing conversation to God's loving action in the world. *Second person inquiry/practice* addresses our ability to inquire with others into issues of mutual concern, through face-to-face dialogue and conversation. *Third person inquiry* then aims at creating communities of inquiry, involving people beyond the direct second person action. It is actualised then through dissemination, reporting or publishing. The quality of the third person practice which flows from the first and second person inquiry/practice can be in concern the progress of the planet and life within the context of inquiry as people attempt to contribute to the building up of communities of faith, trying to live a life of faith in a manner which promotes God's action in the world. They can articulate and disseminate this spirituality in educational pedagogy, organisational processes, and spiritual direction or in other fields, which engage in third person practice. (Coghlan, 2002)

Our research and discernment, undertaken in order to embed spirituality praxis, took place within an organisational context. Organisation development is a facilitative approach to development: it functions by helping members of organisations manage their own change by reflecting on their own experience and coming to their own judgement of what needs to change and how to go about it. It puts considerable emphasis on the work of teams and groups within the development of an organisation, since teams and groups have greater leverage in affecting change in organisations than have individuals. Coghlan suggests an emergent Ignatian framework based on the writings of St Ignatius and describes such a framework for teamwork process, which is explained more comprehensively in the Guidelines in the Appendix. (Coghlan, 2001b:65-74) The process he outlined does reflect our recent process and also gives us and others a useful and encouraging framework and an approach which facilitates spiritual understanding and development of spirituality praxis.

### **15. A Framework for the Spirituality of Organisation Renewal and Suggestions on how to Maintain on-going Good Practice**

Coghlan believes that we need to develop a “spirituality of organisational renewal” and to have frameworks for understanding it in the same way that there are constructs for individual renewal and change. He outlines the “theory and practice” of such organisational development, as an approach to change, which focuses on re-education and helping people to learn and make changes. His thinking and theory, based on “discernment”, again underpins our action research experience and practice, giving additional clear frameworks. He emphasises that the “discernment process” is a re-educative process, involving thought, values and behaviour, focusing on thoughts, feelings and actions and thus can lay a basis for a “spirituality of action”. Spirituality is defined in terms of experience, reflection, decision and action, which is the basis for educational pedagogy, as well as spiritual development as indicated below in his diagram.

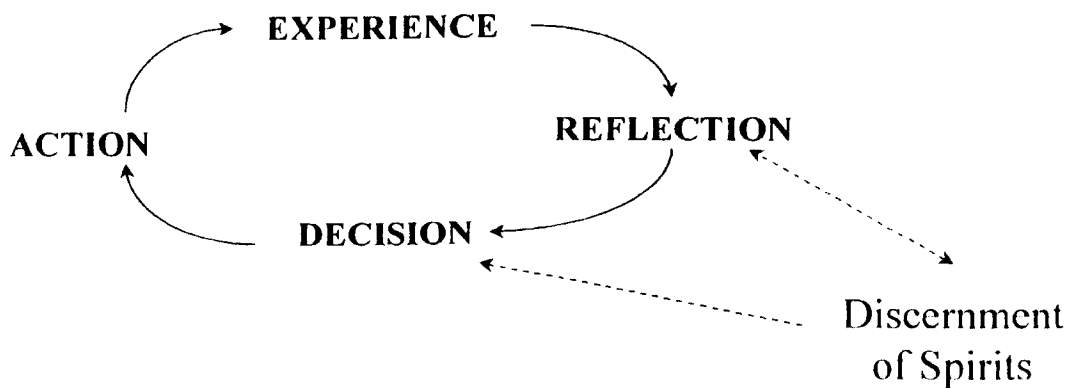


Figure 2-1 Ignatian Pedagogy

Figure 14 – Discernment process

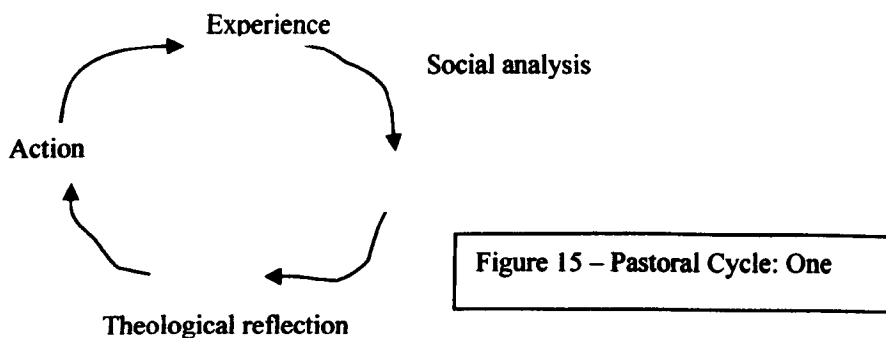
Organisations can engage in this process of change and he described “*the adaptive coping cycle*”, which outlines the experience of change in six steps, which are included in the Appendix. “*Process consultation*” can be applied to an individual and also to a whole organisation, where the “process consultation” helps clients enquire into their experience, develop their own understanding of what is happening, and create their own solutions, which is in direct contrast with traditional consultation models. Process consultation is based on building effective helping relationships and working jointly with clients so they can solve their own problems who then can become process consultants within their own organisations, learning to help their colleagues to see what is happening and why and how to build and implement solutions. Organisational development relies on “action research” which is where consultants and members of the organisation reflect on the experience of change and take action in the light of it as change unfolds. It is one of the cornerstones of organisation development. More of his understanding and approach is included in the Appendix. The description of his suggestions is similar to what we did in the research process and will be on-going as the Development Group and Management Group continue to work together, as outlined in Chapter Five. (Coghlan, 1999)

What Coghlan has outlined does reflect the ingredients of our research process and “way of life” for three years and does also provide a very useful framework of “theory and practice” helping us to understand, both what “did” happen but it also provides guidelines for us and other organisations to progress future development. As a founder

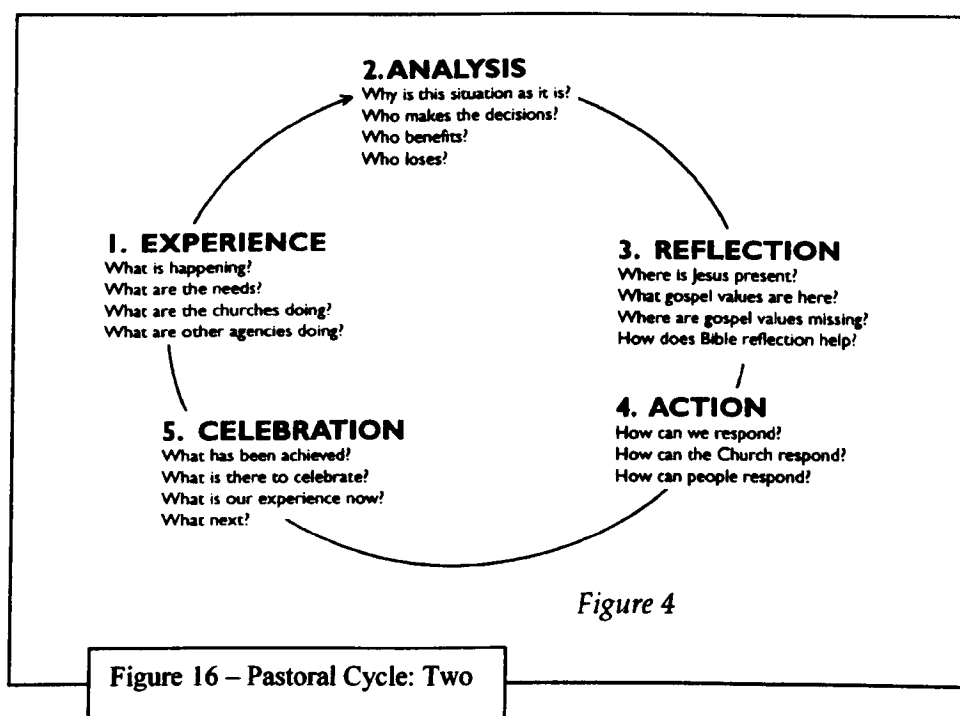
member, ethnographer, with long-term involvement as researcher/worker, in hindsight, I also perceive myself as an internal organisational consultant working “with” the co-researchers. I did also work with an Ignatian process consultation approach, to some degree, bringing an awareness of and skills in attending to the movements of the Spirit “with” those engaged in the tasks of renewal and change which we were concerned with, by facilitating the discernment of the Spirit’s movement, particularly since that was the subject matter for our research. Motivation was a key consideration throughout and we did have to consider, as Coghlan points out, being open to the need for change (unfreezing), changing (moving) and then re-inforcing and stabilising the change (refreezing), while providing psychological safety. As an organisation, we don’t want to revert to old ways and patterns but our structures should safe-guard this process now, as outlined in the Chair of Trustees 2001 Report in Chapter Three.

### 16. The Pastoral Cycle

Jeanne, a co-researcher, stated in her interview that it was now time to actually get involved in something more like “action” as one of the stages of the “Pastoral Cycle” which is referred to in Chapter Five. In it experiences are shared, followed by information input and discussion and a sharing of ideas and a period of reflection when participants put their experiences and discussion into the context of their faith, followed by a period for planning action to be taken. (CAFOD Campaign, 1989-91)



Jeanne has also described the Pastoral Cycle in her recent book stating that, “By making use of the pastoral cycle we can find, if not prescriptions, at least means of monitoring progress.” Hinton and Price state that it is a very simple but effective tool and describe it with five elements which they developed in their “New Way programmes” as outlined below. (Hinton and Price, 2003)



## 17. On- going Spiritual Development and Fruits

Once we have started upon the spiritual journey there is no turning back and we have to be whole hearted and prepared to go all the way with a determination to be transformed. This road to life is narrow and demanding, requiring a condition of complete simplicity, demanding not less that everything, a process and a breakthrough into love. (Freeman, 2002:2-5) We are not alone, because the Holy Spirit is everywhere, in all things, ceaselessly at work upon our small and half grown Spirits, creating and illuminating, restoring and spiritualising as in transforming action. We are deeply interconnected and not separate little units, so all that we do, feel and endure has a secret effect, radiating far beyond ourselves. We enter a vast “*spiritual society*” in which our souls are living tools of the Holy Spirit and become a real distribution centre of God’s creative power (Underhill, *Life as Prayer*: 4-8) However, we do have a choice and “When the evening of this life comes” says St John of the Cross, “you will be judged on love”; the only question asked will be “have you loved well ... was everything that was done, done for love’s sake?” (Underhill, 1929:118) It is “...not what we say or do, but what we are, provides the medium through which God reaches those to whom we are sent.” We should be live wires as links between God’s grace and the world that needs it but first we have to offer ourselves, without conditions, as transmitters of God’s enabling love and in this way our human spirit can touch and change another human spirit. (Underhill, *Life as Prayer*: 15) The fruits of the Spirit are those dispositions and ways of thinking,



speaking and acting which are brought forth in us by the pressure of Divine Love in our souls as manifestations. They represent a progressive series from the point of Love, the eternal living seed from which all else grow. Love is the budding point from which all the rest come. The first sign is a tiny bud of this Charity breaking through the hard and rigid outline of our life. (Underhill, 1995)

### **18. Contexts and Environments for Praxis**

The life of the Spirit is like a *seed* that needs fertile ground to grow, which is a good inner disposition and supportive milieu, which we are responsible for, where we grow and mature, that is, one which allows the mustard seed that God has sown in us to grown into a *strong tree*. (Nouwen, 1994) We have to let go of our “ego” and what “seemed” true in order to let something new emerge, because, as Soelle points out, “the truth cannot communicate itself only as correct belief but is dependent on the struggle for liberation”. Our own context may be that of large or small businesses, workplaces, corporations, governments, churches, schools, charities, hospitals or families yet we are brothers and sisters together. Spirituality doesn't discriminate contexts in its passion for democratic, right and interactive relationships, when we live in a non-hierarchal web of care, sharing power “with” others as we engage together in justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Nor does it value a privatised vertical love relationship with God at the expense of a communal horizontal love of neighbour. (Soelle, 2001) This may not be the type of spirituality people will want which is not to say that everything at Holton Lee is perfect and that we are an ideal model to be emulated. Rather we too have much to learn and the justification for this whole study and these suggested Guidelines is that we are trying to learn and wish to share this knowledge with others.

## Chapter Eight:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our research project was complex as we dealt with designing a research approach, for a new academic subject in order to consider how to embed spirituality praxis within our secular organisation, which then involved understanding spirituality and work and we had to address the gap between theology and spirituality. We attempted to wed together cognitive and experiential knowing, along with research and development within our context. The journey, which began in 1999, was cyclical and non-linear and our Participative Action Research seemed to serve as a bridge between theory and practice as they continually informed each other as praxis, out of which emerged grounded living theory, particularly since we were able to burrow deeply. We participated in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person inquiry and became more informed as an organisation.

Our process was the end and way to get our results, which emerged through embodied knowing which was transformative of individuals, groups and the organisation, the I – we – us and them. We went through triple loop change as a Case Study and found it necessary to also learn from other voices within the field, in order not to be isolated theoretically. Our starting point was to consider our founding vision and mission, as *The Then*, through *The Now* of the research for the sake of *The Tomorrow*. Since Participative Action Research is a political form of inquiry, it helped to affirm peoples' rights and ability to have a say in decisions and generate knowledge thereby shifted the balance of power and was emancipatory. We continue to reformulate disability as a social oppression, moving from the Medical to the Social Model. Through on-going consciousness raising, empowering and education the organisation moved from a hierarchical to a flat structure, shifting from the Mechanistic Modern Paradigm to the Spirituality Paradigm in which the aim is to live out the spiritual values which now undergird the organisation. We learned more significantly that spirituality is concrete and that a liberatory "transformational spirituality" has to do with personal, interpersonal, group, organisational, societal and global levels, since the personal is political and spirituality is socio-political affecting our economic, political, social and religious lives and psychological culture.

On our journey we experienced solidarity for the sake of the organisation. We were not functioning as a focus group but rather as co-researchers who took responsibility to be informed, since the aim was not to have a party-line but rather to learn together with a bottom-up approach, not with top-down theory and ideas, as demonstrated in our use of the tree metaphor. We continually considered the Four Aspects of Holton Lee with a non-compartmentalised approach and intention as the founding vision indicated. We were dealing with several levels of learning and perception concurrently within our research, understanding also that an organisation is also a social design and environment as context for praxis, with interdependent and interrelated parts working together much like a body does. The result was that with increased understanding as a “community of practice” we were more enabled to able to live an empowering and liberating orthopraxis with inner and outer connections maintained. Quantum physics helped us to understand relationships, organisational structure and spirituality, as we moved more towards wholeness, non-dualism and inclusiveness. We more significantly recognise our emerging praxis as “collaborative”, as we continue to work in teams, constantly responding to change, while also recognising that people are the organisation that research is a relationship and through negotiation of meaning we were able to create and codify knowledge. I used diagrams as means of visual representation of what we have understood.

Our environment and climate for praxis implies tangible loving where people are what they are talking about, so in this way the vision has grown in an organic process with mutual leadership so that all are enabled. The starting point for our change was not system change but a change in ourselves as the model reflects. We began our process in the only place we could, that is, “where we were standing” because spirituality is understood through the “lens of praxis”. We therefore had to first understand our research needs and motives, then establish a research group who had to learn to communicate with each other at deep and subtle levels particularly because of the research subject itself. We needed to understand what praxis meant and in order to have sound theoretical underpinnings we needed to know how to appropriate theory in the relationship between theology, religion and spirituality. In the process we experienced change, transformation and deepening relationships, all the while relating our knowing within our organisational context along with a connection to the “outer” social aspect of our global home appreciating that our inner and outer lives and contexts cannot be separated. The individual, organisations and society must all transform since all are

connected and when enough individuals and organisations do shift to a new paradigm so will society, when small pockets of people have experienced an authentic transformation and are living true and holistic spirituality. It was and is not a “quick-fix”.

Spirituality has permeated our whole organisation as we moved through the phases of the learning cycle in a chronological order, not doing a mini loop skipping out stages one and four, by just doing, forming and reformulating plans but rather we insisted on including reflective observation, conceptualisation, discernment and making sense. Therefore we didn't go round in a vicious circle ending up where we started but have experienced fruit on the tree as various outcomes, as indicated in the Report, which include changed people and community, changed structures, a model, development work and embedding of spirituality including a policy and job description written, deeper foundations laid for the future which are consistent with the fifty-seven year old roots. In addition the model and guidelines do provide guideposts and way markers for our on-going journey and for others on their journeys. We will continue with on-going dissemination, awareness-raising and monitoring the vision as we live out praxis in a “community of practice” with shared ownership. Some seeds have fallen and have taken root and borne fruit elsewhere, in other environments of practice, which happens as we interface with guests, visitors, those who come on workshops, attend conferences or others from various organisations, as they “experience” spirituality being “lived out” as a “way of life”. All of the research cycles and the discernment process were helpful on our journey. Reflecting on what Professor Clarke wrote, in Chapter Two, as one of the signatories at the beginning of this project, it does seem, in conclusion, that this project has been significant, groundbreaking and important. We have now applied Participatory Action Research to the topic of spirituality in our context, which itself continues to be grounded in the needs of society and continues, even more significantly, to view spirituality as an integral part of our enterprise and life because it has been interwoven throughout the whole organisation. We understand more comprehensively what “spirituality” means; our research has led to improved practice and some of what we have learned is transferable. We will continue on with our appropriation of spirituality with the understanding that appropriation means transformational actualisation of meaning. As we continue on our journey we are considering the need for a “corporate spiritual companion or guide”.

We will continue to disseminate our understanding of spirituality more explicitly through our web page, the large study and this Report, which will be housed in the resource room at Holton Lee, for all to read, now and in the future. These documents will specifically be used for the induction of full time worker in the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect to help them and the Aspect Group to understand our history, vision, mission and theoretical perspectives. (see job description in Appendix.) Dissemination will also continue through Papers which will be written and published and talks, courses, educational material, symposia, exhibitions and workshops, for instance, on disability and spirituality, as well through our quarterly newsletter. In the short term I will be giving a presentation to the Trustees on the research process and outcomes. I have agreed to co-author a paper about Holton Lee, described as, “something like, Natural Places and the (re)creation of the Self” as a chapter in a book about place and non-place with Dr Menin, the editor of the book. I intend to pursue publishers and to discuss the idea of housing a copy of my report with Universities who run MA courses in Spirituality, that is, Heythrop, Sarum College and Lampeter. I intend to continue to dialogue and network significantly with others working within the field.

### ***Research needs***

Urgent needs for on-going research about “spirituality” remain, for us and others, as indicated at various points throughout the Report. I will highlight some of them below. There continues to be a need to understand suitable frameworks that can safeguard against spirituality becoming a fad and something superficial as a quick-fix. Spirituality remains an emerging academic field of study and continues to have on-going implications, connections and relevance with other academic disciplines such as research, theology, organisations, psychology and science which still needs to be understood more deeply. Schneiders reminds us that motivation for research is to respond to real-life questions such as the search for meaning, particularly with marginalized and excluded people who bring their agenda to the academy, which now demands a whole new approach to knowledge so we can answer questions they ask such as: where knowledge comes from, how it is established, who generates it and what it is for? Interdisciplinarity can respond to these concerns more adequately than intellectual inbreeding of the classical academic specialisations. The importance of considering “context”, within the field of spirituality, necessitates conversation with the social sciences; the socio-political approach is particularly noticeable in liberationist, feminist



and justice-focused approaches to spirituality. Spiritual traditions are embodied in people and not doctrines so more study and understanding of what “loving conduct” means in concrete practice is needed in order to address causes, needs and problems in order to help to meet and eliminate them. Therefore the study of issues and systems is essential otherwise spirituality practice risks being shallow or counterproductive. Spirituality is a life-project yet some think that easy spiritualities can be marketed in our Western culture as the next phase in self-fulfilment espousing a strategy of self-enhancement techniques rather than understanding the deeper inner and outer work required. O’Murchu pointed out that traditional methods of research are inadequate and instead the pastoral ambience provides raw material for a theology which can speak meaningfully. The mechanical worldview is no longer adequate in our pursuit for a more united world so we need to find ways and frameworks which can facilitate such understanding. Coghlan believes that a “spirituality of organisational renewal” needs to be developed along with frameworks for understanding it, which he outlined to some degree, so more research and appropriation could now add to his understanding.

Tosey pointed out that spirituality can become even more psychologised and secularised especially within the business domain and therefore more research needs to be done in the field of practice and perhaps credentials may be needed for those engaging in spirituality. In the Reader on Work and Spirit, various concerns and suggestions emerged, which I will outline below. There is still concern that spirituality can become a “management fad” with formulas and techniques suggested to implement it. Some think a body of knowledge is needed so that others can teach spirituality. More interdisciplinary work needs to be done to understand the relationship of political economy, global economics and politics and cultural values as they affect and govern organisational values. Understanding of research data, collection and knowledge itself needs to be transformed. The management field will benefit by incorporating a spiritual perspective into theories as well as into research and theory development processes. There is also concern that the field of spirituality is accommodating the belief systems of business and the result is a feel-good spirituality without the supporting component and mandate for self-examination, discipline, study and sustained effort. Academics can counterbalance this by ensuring theoretical and practical concerns are raised in literature and contain appropriate and healthy debate. Some believe that new ways are needed for data collection in the emerging paradigms of research, which is made by participants themselves with an inclusive framework using methodologies with a pluralistic concept.

Others expressed concern that spirituality at work may only be old concepts dressed in new spiritual clothes therefore it is essential to review a criticism of the integration of spirituality at work.

As a result of our research and the increasing understanding that we are all inter-connected, living in a web of relationships, I believe there is an urgent need for more interdisciplinary research and development work to be undertaken. We need to have a deeper understanding of spirituality as an academic discipline, how it relates to the field of theology and how it can be lived as liberatory praxis, as a way of life, within all aspects and contexts of our global home in an authentic way. Such research would thus provide further sound theoretical frameworks and understanding while responding to real life situations, needs and people, resulting in appropriation, the transformational actualisation of meaning.

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# APPENDIX

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	<p><b>AN OVERVIEW OF OTHER SIGNIFICANT VOICES</b></p> <p><b>1</b></p>
Gerard Hughes	<p>is a Jesuit, who has been working in and writing about the field of spirituality and justice in the UK and elsewhere, for many years, states in his explanation of the "Four Fold Grid - on finding our way in spirituality ... that the word 'spirituality' is in vogue and keeps appearing in novels, plays and films, political manifestos, government and education papers, in business and industry boardrooms. Bookshops have larger sections dealing with spirituality than with religion, often with a popular section labelled, 'The Occult'. Besides the occult, there are a bewildering variety of "spiritualities" on offer. How are we to find our way among competing and conflicting spiritualities?" (<i>Living Spirituality News Letter January 2002</i>)</p>
Michael Higgins and Douglas Letson	<p>are principal and vice principal, of St Jerome's University in Ontario, Canada. In their book published in 2002, they respond to this statement by art critic, Peter Schjeldahl. "Millennium or no millennium, everybody knows that we are in transition from a former world, which bores us, to a coming one, which numbs us with uncertainty". They say that "One clear sign of this uncertainty and its attendant anxiety can be found in the significant rise of interest in spirituality. People are drawn in increasing numbers to explore the many complex and exciting areas of interconnection between spirituality and other areas of human endeavour and meaning. The new frontiers of knowledge so boldly pioneered by scientists and the new technology elites have opened up grand vistas of challenge and concern for the devout, the questing and the curious." They add that "Fed by the fear of the unknown, new horizons for scientific exploration and experimentation that cut to the heart of human self-definition, post moderns are poised in large numbers to check out the "interior" world. But they need guides, a discourse, a map that will allow them entrée into a world more foreign than that of the microbe, the megabyte and the mutual fund. The thirst for a meaningful or living spirituality is unquenchable and there are not a few purveyors of the "spiritual arts" willing to peddle their dubious wares at a speedy rate and at cut-rate costs. Need is occasionally known to generate desperation and the snake oil salesperson is quick to rise to the entrepreneurial challenge. But spirituality is not a quick fix; it is a life project, and it has been so for centuries. Yet there are those sometimes eccentric and sometimes unnervingly modern pioneers who have chronicled their own spiritual journeys in a way that has made it possible for others to see something of the universal pattern for their own lives." They believe that a genuine spirituality of resistance, grounded in a love both for justice and for the contemplative dimension, will have little time for the easy spiritualities that are so effortlessly marketed in Western culture as the next phase in self-fulfilment. "<i>The Chicken Soup for the Soul</i>" school of spirituality espouses a strategy of self-enhancement techniques, a feel-good process of self-affirmation that appeals to contemporary readers hungry for spiritual fulfilment but disinclined to struggle for spiritual enlightenment" They add that the alternative is found in the writings of those who "speak out of a living tradition, a communal faith, a theological history," and that spirituality which is communal, historical, theological, with justice as part of its very definition, is a spirituality best poised to thrive in the new century, which is not self-occupied and insular (Higgins &amp; Letson 2002: 329-330, 381)</p>
Gwen Cashmore and Joan Puls	<p>wrote from the "Living Spirituality Network" in the UK and list more than fifty-seven spiritualities. They say that it cannot be disputed that there is a widespread interest in spirituality, along with misunderstandings, distortions and grandiose claims, yet the search is always for healthy and deeper integrated practice rather than that which is too individualistic and focussed on individual inwardness. They caution that it is therefore important to know who it is who is actually defining spirituality. (Cashmore and Puls 2000:5-9)</p>



<b>David Abram</b>	a philosopher, believes that contemporary spirituality challenges us to reclaim connections and to recover, resume, redeem, heal and repair rents in the fabric of our world, so we can all live together as one family in a reconciled new creation. (Abram, 1996:268)
<b>Gerard Cavanaugh</b>	a Jesuit from the USA, works within a Management Business School. He gives an overview of current thought about understanding new spirituality in business and writes that it means different things to different people, which we will consider under the section on spirituality and organisation. He states that sixty percent of people are positive towards spirituality but negative towards organised religion which had an impact on how spirituality has developed with no one dominant religion, hence neither in spirituality in the workplace. (Cavanaugh, 2000:153,71)
<b>Sandra Schneiders</b>	a Theologian from the USA adds further caution about spirituality stating that people often have a vague, uninformed, shallow and shapeless generalised ethos or instead that of the extremism and instability of cults. "The term spirituality is used so indiscriminately today that it risks losing all specific meaning." (Schneiders, 1999)
<b>Michael Downey</b>	a theologian from the USA, states that we are spiritually ill as a result of our fragmented, post-modern thinking and being. The soul sickness which people experience as they yearn and search for "something more" is not only at a personal level but also at corporate levels with an accompanying spiritual and social crisis. The subsequent tidal wave of interest has now afforded us a smorgasbord of various types of spirituality, which can be very confusing. However, because there is still a lack of precision about what people mean when they speak of spirituality, Downey thinks we need a definition which allows, "enough room" for all that is authentic in the quest for the sacred" (Downey, 1997: 13-15)
<b>Richard Clouser</b>	a philosopher from the USA, in the introduction to his book titled, "Knowing with the Heart", states that we can know God is real. However he also points out that this topic is not considered polite conversation these days because Religion is a taboo subject in public. However, he recognises that people think they have no religious belief when they actually do, that they have unconscious assumptions or that many actually call it by another name, thereby disguising its religious character. He emphasizes that religious belief cannot be walled off from the rest of knowledge since it is actually one of the most influential beliefs we hold, affecting our conceptions of human nature and destiny and ideas of society, justice, ethics and science. (Clouser 1999)
<b>David Lorimer</b>	a British Scientist wrote in the preface to the book titled: "The Spirit of Science", in 1998, that "For most scientists inner exploration and self-consciousness are not yet part of the training. This omission is beginning to take on the dimensions of a tragedy ... yet science has known for several decades that the consciousness of the experimenter affects the experiment. Hence the importance of the scientists and the mystics coming together to discuss similarities in their twin approaches to truth and knowledge. It is even more important to transform that knowledge into experience. Today, scientists with only a modicum of self-knowledge are working with vast creative as well as potentially destructive powers in many fields. Mystics can help them gain the wisdom that is so necessary." (Lorimer, 1998:13)
<b>Danah Zohar</b>	Current dialogue between spirituality and science is also important in our Holton Lee context since as Zohar, a physicist from the UK states, the "radically new science of the Twentieth Century is more compatible with our spiritual intuitions ... taking its insights on board may actually help us to articulate a more modern spiritual and moral vision" (Zohar 1994:32) She also points out in her book, "SQ, Spiritual Intelligence" that we are a spiritually dumb culture, alienated, fragmented, disconnected and often narcissistic, ego-centred and individualistic in our search for meaning and purpose (Zohar 2000:16).
<b>Douglas Burton-Christie</b>	an American theologian, believes that Spirituality has a wide berth today since it refers to, "the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms, not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives ... it is understood to be inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience ... is more inclusive and elastic ... it is the whole of one's emotions and behaviour in respect to what is ultimate ... is holistic, encompassing all one's relationships to all of creation - to the self, and to others, to society and nature, to work and leisure - in a fundamentally spiritual or religious orientation..." (Burton-Christie 1994:38)

<b>Adrian Smith</b>	is a missionary priest living in the UK who has written much on spirituality and leads retreats on the challenges posed by contemporary culture to spirituality. He wrote that the mechanical worldview is no longer adequate for our times and we recognise that we are all caught up in the pursuit of a more united world, a more harmonious way of life; a movement towards wholeness, non-dualism and inclusiveness. (Smith, 2000:376)
<b>Faith Lees</b>	co-founder of Holton Lee, wrote that it is hard to sustain and requires us to go on loving in the face of seeming unlove and lack of understanding in real relationships, as we work together, with qualities of gentle openness. She wrote, "so faith, hope and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love," which is the environment for hope and faith and which can change a vision from dreams or fantasy into a solid shape. This happens when realism and hope go hand in hand. Then we can stand up for justice and peace helping to re-establish a society capable of supporting a healthy loving environment. She reminds us that it is easy to seem very spiritual if we "talk" about God and "vision" but you also need to be practical and down to earth and get on with the job. Our relationships are how we get where God wants us to go and with God "how you get there is as important as where you go"; people are always part of a vision that is truly God's. "Creative love is where there is no gap between what we profess about loving and the reality of what we live out", then our vision can become a living reality and others can also become integrated. The vision is to create an environment of love, where people can feel and understand love at all levels, that is, with their heads, minds and spirit which means that we have to live it out on a daily level so people can experience it. In that sense we embody the vision. Once we have experienced something with all of our being we don't forget it and this tangible nature of love is necessary today since we live in an age when anything can happen, in an age of searching and self-discovery and scientific discovery. (Lees, 1987)
<b>Diarmuid O'Murchu</b>	an RC priest, psychologist and writer on Spirituality, living in the UK, states that traditional methods of research in science are inadequate and dissatisfying when the subject of our theology is the human as relational, planetary and cosmic creature and our connection is with the universe – our home planet Earth. We are curtailed by patriarchal consciousness so the challenge for theologians is to shift theology out of the staid study environment of academic institutions. It is no longer appropriate to analyse our emerging world from the scholarly gaze of university, seminary or theological college. Instead the pastoral ambience can provide raw material for a theology that speaks meaningfully to the emerging masses because truth cannot be hemmed in or pinned down. The theologian is accountable to the "community at large" since everything in our universe is interconnected and inter-related and nothing makes sense in isolation. Quantum theory, psychology and perceptions of the planet earth viewed from space alerts us to the primacy of meaning within therefore theologians of the future require a broad and inclusive spectrum of wisdom and understanding to comprehend meaningfully what life is all about, to explore in a discerning context and discard the dualist construction of sacred and secular, moving in a spiritual space which seeks to transcend the narrow and ideological confines of religion of power and fear. (O'Murchu, 2000:219-230)
<b>Katherine Zappone</b>	states that spiritual traditions are embodied in people not doctrine but with experience in the context and social location and socio-political consideration to embody spiritual values both as individuals, groups and organisation, so we can live with loving conduct which can meet the needs and problems and address their causes and help eliminate them so practice isn't shallow. Spirituality is to embody, in our lifestyle, values professed verbally. (Zappone, 1991:164)
<b>Ursula King</b>	a UK theologian, wrote that "transformation of society, culture and consciousness have deep repercussions on the role of religion and spirituality, in fact, a rightly understood and practiced spirituality might give direction and meaning to these transformations." There is a need to develop a new kind of "global spirituality", a new holistic spirituality works in and through all human realities – a transformational spirituality commensurate with a cosmos which is in spiritual transformation, wherein personal, social and global developments are not seen as apart, but as closely interdependent. Theology is rooted in spirituality committed, oriented and rooted towards transformational praxis but Spirituality must permeate the personal and political animating our thought and action and imagination so we can work for the transformation of the whole world and all life within. So there is an urgent need to work for broader development of spiritual awareness and sensibility among all peoples – in contemporary culture in a dynamic response to the call of the Spirit. Only a transformed action-orientated spirituality can respond to the hope and agonies of our suffering world. (Ursula King, the Way No 73 1993:18-20)

<b>Dorothee Soelle</b>	a theologian, suggests we have fallen asleep and live in a prison with a standardised, global economic order of technocracy, a super-engine where human beings are alienated, addicted and dependent. So one of the spiritual difficulties is inner connection between globalisation and individualization. (Soelle 2002:191-194)
<b>David Coghlan</b>	A Jesuit teaches organisation development and action research and believes we need to develop a spirituality of organisational renewal – have frameworks for understanding it in the same way there are constructs for individual renewal and change. “A spirituality of action” is thus defined in terms of a cycle: experience → reflection → decision → action, as a basis for educational pedagogy and spiritual development. (Coghlan, 1999)

## 5 YEARS ON AT HOLTON LEE OF POST GREEN MINISTRY

Five years from now the plans which we made five years ago and committed ourselves to fulfil should 'be complete. When we heard God say that this was to be Post Green's new image and project, we had to commit ourselves to achieving it. This meant that as we were asking for public money we were legally bound to use the money that we were given for only this. I underline this because there has always been an undercurrent of criticism of Post Green which says that we are only doing all of Holton Lee for ourselves and won't go on to enlarge the vision for people with disabilities. Therefore the big Trusts who have helped us are already asking anxiously about our future plans. In case this criticism may end up as the fact. In fact the Charity Commissioners would not allow us to stop as we are legally committed and Post Green Community Trust would have to find the money to repay those who had given us money for the project as we had stated it.

### SO IN FIVE YEARS TIME WE EXPECT:

1. All the necessary buildings to fulfil the teaching and caring ministry of Post Green to be in place, and to be running as a viable financial undertaking.  
That means that there will be sufficient beds to maintain this – approximately 40 over the whole site. There will also be adequate buildings to allow the ministry of faith building and creating to be maintained. This would mean sufficient space for study and enjoyment of the natural habitats, room for quiet reflection and gentle services for those who want them, carefully thought through use of the multi-purpose hall to enable scope for dancing, acting, music-making, art, sculpture and public viewing of all the above both by the residents of Holton Lee and touring companies for the benefit of the neighbouring locality.
2. Sufficient personnel to be working efficiently and gently to produce the ethos of Post Green Community. This will mean having Community members who are trained in spiritual and in secular methods and are respected by the local people.
3. A management structure in place which will enable this to happen. If there is no one in the Community who can do this job, someone must be appointed to do it who will work sensitively and sensibly with the Trustees and the Community.
4. Those who understand the various aspects of the ministry must take the responsibility to develop along open and creative lines which have up till now led the way in ministry. If there is no one in the Community who can do this ( e.g. The ecological and environmental side and also the medical side) someone else must be appointed to do it so that it can become integrated with the spiritual and counselling side.
5. All those with the weight of these responsibilities must be given the resources to do this, even if it means Post Green finding the money through fund-raising. The quality of the ministry is Post Green's not the Trustees of Holton Lee; they are responsible for the money to keep it financially viable, not for the maintenance of the faith of the Village.

Written by Faith Lees July 1996

## 20 YEARS ON FOR POST GREEN MINISTRY AT HOLTON LEE

In 20 years Holton Lee will be a well established centre of learning in integrated studies on ecological, environmental, spiritual, and therefore be a healing centre. Sometimes we have called it a CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE meaning a quality of everything that is necessary if it is to be a teaching centre nationally and internationally.

This means:

Relations with the following recognised fields and disciplines so we can learn together

a) Medical. Including social welfare. The most up-to-date equipment and thinking on how to enable the clients to become independent and to help them reach their potential.

b) Ecological. In touch with the new feasible ways of using natural energy – sun, wind, waste disposal, horticulture etc

c) Environmental. In touch with the different fields of natural studies – RSPB, botanical studies, marine studies – which are relevant to the area in which Holton Lee is situated. Note – heathland – Poole Harbour, Ocean (English Channel – Atlantic Ocean) – the air – urban development – waste disposal.

d) Artistic Expression. The enabling of art in every form of artistic expression is a fundamental principle of Holton Lee. It can be expressed through the natural beauty of the environment, visual arts, dance, drama, music and perhaps first through the architecture and its ability to understand the special beauty of the site – its sense of light, freedom and space.

e.) Theological. In touch with the international theological thinking on world issues – how to deal with injustice in all areas – this includes financial injustices e.g. Mega-businesses and hard-up economies – issues on war and intervention from outside – tie up between creation and healing.

f). Counselling: and Spiritual Direction. Holton Lee must be accredited and up-to-date with all the different ways of looking at spirituality and counselling, there must be an eclectic approach to all of this and not an insistence that OUR way is right.

1. **Question 1. Does there need to be room for outdoor activities? E.g. Sailing, horse riding, rock climbing, archery, fencing and so on.**
2. **Question 2. May 20 years on be the time for an underground part of the building as contemplated by Holton Lee and Ken Morgan at the beginning?**

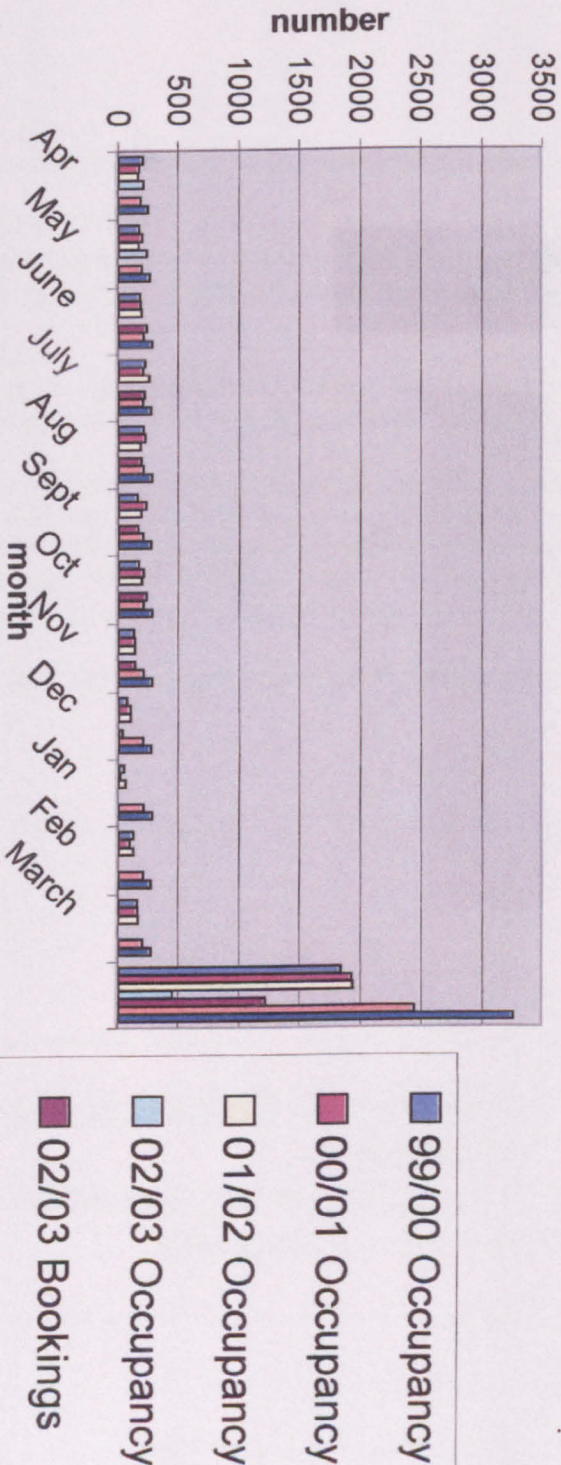
Written by Faith Lees July 1996.



	99/00 Occupancy	00/01 Occupancy	01/02 Occupancy	02/03 Occupancy	02/03 Bookings	full (75% capacity)	theoretical full
Apr	205	174	165	209	187	187	249
May	174	199	166	238	195	195	260
June	182	185	196		209	209	279
July	222	205	255		203	203	270
Aug	208	222	187		209	209	279
Sept	157	235	191		165	203	270
Oct	168	211	197		235	209	279
Nov	127	134	137		134	209	279
Dec	71	99	96		33	203	270
Jan	48	16	61			209	279
Feb	122	88	121			203	270
March	155	159	162			202	269
	1,839	1,927	1,934	447	1,217	2,440	3,253

Red figures show record bookings

barn bed nights



Barn bed nights prepared by Liz Jones 27/05/02



## **Praxis as experienced today at Holton Lee – a summary of key principles which emerged in the interviews which demonstrates actual experience**

### **Tom Lees**

Tom is a founder of Post Green and Holton Lee. I asked Tom to reflect on what he thinks and feels about spirituality at Holton Lee. In his interview he mainly emphasised some of the foundational understanding and then spoke more about the land and the quality of life for people who visit. Tom believes that the place is sacred with a prayer soaked atmosphere like a cathedral where people feel safe even if they don't understand why. Therefore those who work at and run Holton Lee need to be made aware that it is something beyond ourselves and be sensitive to it, so they can be sensitive to others who work there and then they are able to be sensitive those who come, thus creating a place of peace, so guests can find their own potential since they are allowed to be themselves. We must avoid having any sort of regime or principles where we might want people to conform to any particular set of beliefs or ways of behaving that we might have in mind. We may even yet discover more of our foundations with Faith House opening. The four aspects are each part of the foundational building blocks and therefore have to be taken into account whatever we are interpreting or doing, otherwise we can become lop sided with areas becoming totally separate from each other. Our main motivation is to improve a quality of life by empowering people and not exercising power over them.

### **Mike O'Hara**

Mike has been involved with Holton Lee since 1994 and has been a Trustee for the past 3 years. He is an artist and registered blind as a visually impaired person. In his interview he wanted to talk about disability, art, the environment and the vision, as he understands it, with his accompanying understanding of societal and political implications. He emphasised that the loss of independence and resulting low self-esteem is what gets one in the end, not so much the disability. In our society you are expected to conform and therefore you aspire to a particular life-style so the secret is to build self-esteem. In the mainstream the public perception is to see disabled people negatively and therefore he tries to show people that artists with disabilities can do just the same, as anyone else because there is integrity about the work regardless of your disability. Holton Lee provides an opportunity for people to come a place which is not a ghetto stuck in the middle of nowhere as an offshoot of a disabled day centre but rather a place where people can come and make art with an inspirational environment all around. He stated that we still need to find a way to articulate what we are doing sufficiently well so when the words "Holton Lee" are mentioned what will pop into peoples' minds is, "a safe place to go" and then we won't have to "explain" it all with words. But, he believes, this will take a few more years for us to do and it is where the Four Aspects meet in the middle. He emphasized that we will have a problem because people see Holton Lee as a pigeon hole place where all the disabled people go. Everyone wants to be "normal" so you aren't given a wide berth when what you do seems unsociable. Because of that it will always be a battle forever at Holton Lee until "society as a whole" starts to accept disabled people on the same terms. For him then "spirituality", at the end of the day, means doing the right thing, so you can be happy with yourself; we all want affirmation. He believes that "spirituality" is the hardest part of all at Holton Lee because it is different for everyone and each person has their own interpretation of it. He pointed out that he didn't feel really able to explain it all with words, but still dreams that eventually Holton Lee will be a place where people are able to actively participate in a lot of things going on all the time.

### **Stella Neil**

Stella is a disabled woman who has stayed, nine times in total, as a guest at Holton Lee over the past few years. During that time she has met with and interfaced with a lot of other guests and also has experienced an increase in her own impairment, which has affected her mobility. Stella emphasised that it feels like paradise on earth, with the serenity of another planet, where you get enveloped and feel nothing can go wrong or harm you, it is something very very special and magnetic, which she felt within two minutes of arriving. You can have your own space to think about life and you can lose yourself and even forget all the troubles of the outside world. Peoples' attitudes towards their lives change; they are treated with dignity and utmost respect, made to feel like a human being and often find hidden talents. It is beneficial being here because people shed their disabilities and it never occurs to her to think about the fact that they are disabled people but they feel like human beings. Even families enjoy coming to visit guests for reunions; friendships are also built up. At meals times they enjoy a quality of food and hilarity, sharing ideas and learning from each other. She thought it was a miracle and generous act to preserve the land or Mother Nature for such a special purpose and posterity. She felt that there is someone watching over here, giving great peace of mind. She gets uplifted and mentally recharged which is more therapeutic than medication but said that is all has to do with such inner feelings therefore it is hard to make sense in sharing it, and she couldn't find the right words to share what she felt.

### **Liz Jones**

Liz is the Residential Administrator and wanted to be interviewed not just within that role but wanted to respond as an employee of Holton Lee, more broadly. Liz didn't think that spirituality is understandable with a benchmark stating what it is. She feared that even having a "spirituality group" could lead people to think it had a franchise on spirituality rather than spirituality being seen as a part of the Holton Lee community. She thought that the word or concept of spirituality is difficult because of its Christian background which is also an issue with some funders and with our concept of being accessible for everyone. It is difficult since we say we are non-denominational and so make our work a lot harder.

She fears that we might separate everything into aspects rather than appreciating that Holton Lee is just different and people feel it when they come up the drive. They talk about leaving your cares at the bottom of the lane, that it is something about the way people talk to each other, respect each other, genuinely accepting everybody for what they are and not what we want them to be, and aren't judgemental, which is absolutely astounding. There is something about the essence of the place, with its constant search to say, we won't give up even with difficult people but instead try to continue a relationship with them even if, as some guests are, "right cantankerous". It is something to do with "attitude" which is in addition to the environment, access the arts and the fact we welcome all people, trying to make a family environment. Lots of equal opportunity employers "talk about" and put into words that people shouldn't be judgemental with the result that people feel they aren't "allowed" to be. However at Holton Lee it is more like an "unwritten rule" not enforced. So she asks why we need to unpick and say what spirituality is, because the problem is that when you try to christen things it falls apart and breaks down so why don't we leave it alone and not try to fix it if it isn't broken? There is a problem about how we sell ourselves and what we say about ourselves. We all have different interpretations of spirituality. Perhaps it all depends on faith, recognising that even if we don't believe in anything, we can still be spiritual beings. She thought that something of Tom can remain after he dies in what he has written, and the same with Faith Lees' books. She wonders who will pick up his role of being a watchful eye then. She thinks it is a mistake to have different aspects seen as legs on a stool since spirituality should be seen as the seat of the stool, pervading all that we do here, including the arts, environment and disabled people. There is an interface between all Four Aspects but we need to recognise that spirituality can only exist

from within the other aspects and not on its own whereas Disability, Art and the Environment could. The management group could be right in the middle of the circle like a four leaf clover.

### **Derek Coates**

Derek has been at Holton Lee for the past four years taking responsibility for developing the organic gardens from scratch, working initially as a volunteer and now in two days paid employment. Derek feels that spirituality comes back to nature but that people are still frightened by the word, don't understand it, think it is going back to religion and that they will be put upon. He sees it more as the goodness inside of people. He also feels there is something different about Holton Lee, he doesn't know what, but he felt it the first day he came, as a presence you can't prove or disprove. You can't explain it either but perhaps it has to do with it being purposely designed to retain some things which people can experience and the fact Tom gave the land instead of selling it. He said that it has been important to feel I am doing something that has meaning, not just working as a means to an end, realising that there is something more but you don't have to go to church or have a rigid religion to know that. His creative side is expressed in the garden; he understands his landscape is his canvas on which he can put his interpretation, but he added that you also need to feel confident to do so. Even though he could do it more quickly it is amazing to experience the pleasure others get by helping in the garden. We have to have faith and convince people that it is a good idea so they can financially support us. He believes that humour and a good laugh helps to pull people around.

### **Geraldine O'Meara**

Geraldine was part of the founding group for Holton Lee and now works on a contract basis with guests, providing both counselling and retreat giving. Geraldine said that the biggest motive for people is to become more fully who they are, to find out more about themselves and to develop, even if they can't articulate that. Spirituality is about becoming one with who we are and Holton Lee is a place where people feel accepted and safe, both within the buildings and in the environment, which envelops them. Creativity, like poetry or doing pottery, helps tap into their spirituality and the experience feels sacred, beyond human understanding, like an electricity or presence of the Spirit with them. Creativity or walking the land helps people both get in touch and they are touched more deeply and are able to process what is going on inside them. It is all of Holton Lee that contributes to this, including the food and the wildlife, all of which makes it safer and facilitates faster healing. It is the result of prayer, which happened there for many years, which affects everything whether we feel it, or not. Spirituality comes from the heart and people immediately feel its pulse and heart all around. Compared to a church you don't have all the rituals here but can go beyond to the heart of it all. We need to know what the ingredients are which will keep this spiritual energy going and healthy which needs to be integrated in all quarters or aspects. She thought the main ingredients are the environment, quality of life, relationships, honesty, commitment and care and trust. It is also essential for an accompanier of others to know an integration and comfortableness firstly with their own humanity and spirituality so they can then feel comfortable with others.

## Voice of “Artist in Residence”

James Wear was our first disabled Artist in Residence. His residency was arranged through Cumbria College of Art and Design where he was just about to complete his BA and he was with us for a month in the summer of 2000. He arrived with a set of projects in mind and they completely changed when he experienced the reality of Holton Lee and so he worked mainly with the land. One of his projects was installation art on the Faith House site. He stated in a video made of Holton Lee during the time he was with us, that, “he wanted to work with the people who stay and work here to begin hopefully a period of time when Holton Lee will have a permanent Artist in Residence. The major influences whilst working here have been spirituality and the environment and the relationship between others and the relationship I have with the land itself. The notion of the land being sacred and the history it has, has really inspired me to produce very simple and accessible pieces of work.”

James, who is now doing an MA in art attended DA21 as a delegate. During it he said that being at Holton Lee completely changed his understanding of art, moving it from mainly a personal pursuit to one which addresses the needs of society. After leaving Holton Lee, for his final degree project he created a body of work entitled “Archive Enabled”. It is described as a “portable filing system that can be transported to any location as a meeting table. The archive and its contents will form a focal point that will promote the discussion of issues relating to disability arts. The body of work intends to address the authenticity disability arts has as a device to promote and empower ‘disability culture’. Firstly, inviting those involved in disability arts to contribute information. Secondly, inviting a wide (yet specific) audience to debate why such an activity exists. Consideration being given to a post-modern discourse, concerning both the issues relating to the subject matter and the project’s use of aesthetics, in an attempt to relate social and artistic issues within the work. The work will experiment with many factors, including functional, social and relational aesthetics and consider the use and interaction of artistic and social models. The work does not intend to campaign but to stimulate discussion. The experimental nature of the work is an attempt to address new relationships between art and society, artist and viewer. It is hoped that the project will provoke diverse discussion and usage as the archive is used and relocated.” Since the conference it is now permanently located at Holton Lee within Faith House. James subsequently graduated with 1<sup>st</sup> Class Honours.

## Guest voices and writing

*Kevin Gillespie*, a frequent guest at Holton Lee wrote in one of our newsletters two years ago that during the three years he had been coming to Holton Lee he had developed an interest in bird watching and then added new dimensions to this interest by acquiring a digital camera and doing glass painting of birds. He wrote about Holton Lee, in the MS Magazine, that, “There are certain places you visit in your life that have a special atmosphere, something intangible. You can’t see it but you feel it on a deep level. Usually they are underdeveloped natural places where the land and wildlife are loved and respected ... although my life was dramatically changed by MS, it is now so full and in such a different way.” (Gillespie, 2000)

*Lynda Jenkins* after visiting Holton Lee with her husband wrote in Yes Magazine, a piece titled, “A Chance to Touch the Trees”. “... so much to do and see within our immediate environment. Being within such a natural and unspoiled place had a very healing effect on us and I was later to find out that all sort of other forms of healing were available at The Barn – aromatherapy, massage, reflexology, counselling and spiritual guidance ... This unique place, with its positive energy and healing atmosphere, is a tranquil haven where visitors can find rest and peace from stress and discover more of their own true selves.

After a blissful week at Holton Lee, I began to understand that the special energy that I had encountered on our arrival was the energy of the love that has been invested in the extraordinary place, which is run by a group of very special, caring, dedicated and loving people. We will certainly be returning.” (Jenkins: 18-19)

*Lucy Pinney* wrote in The Times about her visit to Holton Lee with her six year old son Nat, who at that point was temporarily using a wheelchair having recently broken his leg. I have included her own account, narrative or real-life experience and story in full since she, in her dialogue with Tony, is able, as a writer, to give both an objective but informed account of some of the issues and experiences of first hand experience of disability. “When my six year old son broke his leg two weeks ago, a local medical supply firm kitted him out with a wheelchair that could be folded to the size of a suitcase and squeezed in my car. I was most impressed. But at Holton Lee they were both amused and appalled. ‘Look at that’, the director, Tony Heaton, said. ‘That wheelchair is typical of a non-disabled person making a decision on someone else’s behalf. That is a professional saying, ‘Here is a small boy with strong arms who is fit and active – let’s completely immobilise him.’ To prove his point, Heaton leapt out of his own wheelchair – he was injured in a motorcycle accident 30 years ago - and insisted that my son, Nat, try it out. Unlike our chair, Heaton’s had enormous wheels that Nat could use to propel himself about, and Heaton even showed him how to do wheelies in it. We had gone to Holton Lee, a centre for disabled people set in 350 acres of woodland, salt-marsh and heath on the edge of Poole Harbour, in frustration at the difficulty of finding anything entertaining for a child to do while stuck in a wheelchair. Suddenly the world had become bothersomely inaccessible. Going to the cinema was the worst. Nat, his wheelchair and all the popcorn I had bought him, had to be painfully hauled up three sets of sweeping stairs, of the sort loved by romantic heroines intent on making a flash entrance to a ballroom. The oddest thing was, I had never noticed those stairs before. I will remember every popcorn-coated step now. And the way the washrooms seem to have shrunk to an impossible tight fit. Even the countryside is too bumpy for us.

Still, it was different at Holton Lee. Heaton explained how having barriers constantly put in their way could stop disabled people from trying to achieve anything. By making its facilities easily accessible the centre aims to empower visitors, but this can occasionally cause trouble. ‘We had a guy visit once who had had a stroke. His wife left him here so she could take a week’s holiday, and she told us he was completely helpless. But no sooner had she disappeared than we asked him if he would like to go out in the golf buggy, and showed him how to drive it. Every day after that he was out on his own, exploring, and by the time his wife had returned he had learnt how to bath himself, wash his own clothes in the machine, and become almost completely independent. She was furious. She stormed into the office and said: ‘What have you done? There is nothing for *me* to do now!’ More poignantly, Heaton explained that when one woman in her thirties visited, staff avoided mentioning her romance with another guest because her parents might disapprove. ‘That is part of the oppression. What right has any parent to control a 30-year-old’s love life? It is quite subtle, really. Normally we let our children grow up when they start managing their own lives, but if you are still toileting, bedding and feeding an adult, it is hard to stop treating them like a child.’

The more Nat and I explored the paths, watching the herds of sika deer and weasel families, the more remarkable it seemed that such a huge wilderness had remained intact. But as the former owner, Sir Thomas Lees, explained, protecting the land was part of the reason for founding Holton Lee. ‘About ten years ago a fellow came along and said to me, “You do realise this is worth £5 million and is the next place to be developed between Poole and Wareham? What we need here are nice big executive houses, each in its own half-acre of land, with a fence and a rottweiler. And then we could have a marina at the water’s edge with a hotel”. I said I preferred it peaceful, and anyway it was an SSSI and an

area of outstanding beauty and he would never get permission to build. He answered: "I have built marinas in many places. Every time I was violently opposed, and every time I got what I wanted." So I thought, "Who do you know how to bribe?" And I turned it into a charitable trust.'

As the afternoon wore on, Heaton found Nat a motorised wheelchair, showed him how the controls worked and let him loose on a stretch of heath. While I tried to hide my anxiety, Nat sped off, shrieking with delight. When he became stuck attempting, a trifle ambitiously, to cross a narrow bridge, Lees confided that this was one of the problems of the place. Visitors were so euphoric, tasting freedom for the first time, that it was difficult to restrain them. 'The hardest thing for the staff to do is persuade them to take a walkie-talkie when they go exploring, so they can summon help if they need it. Overconfidence is par for the course.' Still, it is infinitely better than gloom and immobilisation. (Pinney, 2001)



## WORKSHOP TO AGREE A POLICY STATEMENT FOR SPIRITUALITY/PERSONAL GROWTH

Wednesday January 10<sup>th</sup> 2001

**Facilitator – Sam Field**

Sam was introduced by Tony, and started the day with two short sessions intended to establish a framework for subsequent discussions;-

### 1) **POLICIES – What do we mean?**

In the voluntary and public sectors, and also in parts of the private sectors, policies are produced;-

- a) *To align with current law, and/or to demonstrate political correctness.*  
e.g. equal opportunities, open recruitment
- b) *Reference documents based on experience and/or external guidance*  
e.g. schools' policies on curriculum subjects
- c) *Guides/checklists to specific procedures*  
e.g. health and safety, child protection, child restraint

The consensus was that Holton Lee needed something in the region of (b) – e.g. the definition of a core activity which demanded a policy, and which aligned with Mission and Vision statements

### 2) **STAKEHOLDERS – Who are they?**

The primary stakeholders were;-

- Staff
- Trustees
- Volunteers

They would make the policy and related activities accessible and useful to;-

- Residents
- Visitors
- Local community
- National and international audiences

Additional stakeholders were;-

- Residents
- Visitors
- Funders
- Partner organisations

(The requirements of this last group - and potential added value over and above their stated contribution - should be observed, and their non-alignment with aspects of the Policy should be the subject of mutual respect)

In discussion, it was emphasised that linkage with other Holton Lee 'legs' and activities should be implicit within this process. Sam introduced Professor Charles Handy's 'fried egg' job description by way of illustration. The yolk defines what the primary stakeholders *must* do in terms of spirituality and personal growth: the white defines what they *may* or *should* do in this context, as well as in the wider context of integrating other Holton Lee activities.

### 3) DEFINITION

In the next two sessions Sam had intended the group to define *Spirituality* and *Personal Growth* separately. In discussion it was agreed that this should not be done. The two 'activities' should be linked under the heading *SPIRITUALITY/PERSONAL GROWTH*.

We then moved on to a definition (to be prefaced by Holton Lee's Mission and Vision Statements);-

**"At Holton Lee, we believe spirituality to be both personal and social, challenging us to reclaim connections with ourselves, others, the sacred and our world.**

**It is inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience, thus integrating body, mind, and spirit, and facilitating personal growth.**

**Such growth comes from discovering our inner potential, and growing into the fullness of who we are created to be, recognising our interdependence with one another and the world we belong to."**

To bring this definition to life and implement it as a Holton Lee policy we should;-

- Share this understanding with staff, trustees and volunteers particularly through regular training. They then share/live it out with visitors and residents
- Live it
- Communicate it via networking, integration and overlap with all Four Aspects of Holton Lee's programme.
- Define the resources needed to implement it (existing and required)
- Review, and then develop the above into a detailed and inclusive written policy

The outcome from this exercise should be a *shared intent*, leading to a simple, comprehensive and effective policy.

#### **4) HOW DO WE DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE THE CONCEPT/DEFINITION OF SPIRITUALITY/PERSONAL GROWTH?**

*All of (4) is the task of the Spirituality Group, directly or via consultation/delegation*

Some of this paragraph replicates (3), but so did the discussion, which was intended to put flesh on the bones of (3).

##### **4.1) *What should be done?***

- Live the concept
- Take opportunities to discuss, thereby furthering relationships amongst ourselves, and enabling Holton Lee to own the concept
- Articulate the concept in a written policy, which would integrate it into Holton Lee's organisational structure particularly focusing on the overlap with other policies.

##### **4.2) *How should it be given expression, developed and filled out?***

###### **a) Define the human resources required, e.g.**

- Assume the need for a new key appointment (unless contra-indicated as the homework continues), define the task, job/person descriptions, full time/part time
- Other staff roles (new & existing)
- Volunteers
- Training for Trustees, staff and volunteers is on-going
- Management & supervision

###### **b) Ditto physical resources, e.g.**

- Building – accessibility and suitability for intended programme (especially factors which may influence the layout of Faith House)
- Implications for other premises and land

###### **c) Physical aspects of programme and impact on (a-b) – what will we want to do, e.g.**

- Quiet room
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Exhibitions
- Quiet days
- Retreats
- Services
- Outreach
- Spiritual direction
- Counselling
- Relevant business plan aspects, e.g. how much can the building take in a given period, pricing policy, what will be the cost and revenue implications?

###### **d) Who will it be available to?**

- Holton Lee staff/volunteers, residents, visitors
- People - local, national and international
- Local churches
- Local organisations

- National and international organisations
- *HOW?* Balance between activities directly run by Holton Lee, 'passive' facilities for visitors/residents/local people, 'self-drive' lettings, facilitating/enabling other organisations' events/programmes
- Consistency of above with Holton Lee's vision/spirit/ethos

e) Intangible aspects, e.g. articulate the concept by defining

- Over-arching spiritual direction
- Policy on counselling/facilitating and 'being there' for individual visitors, groups, etc
- Direct Holton Lee inputs into Spirituality/Personal Growth programme
- Conceptual resources available/required
- Cutting edge uniqueness (dialogue/individuals/maze)
- Replicability /Centre of Excellence
- Disciplines required
- Relationships amongst ourselves
- Integration with Holton Lee's four aspects/ activities – (including feasibility of doing this)

f) Essential Processes, e.g.

- Research/ comparison with other ventures, etc
- Desirability or otherwise of time-limited pilot programme/s
- Business Plan
- Budgeting
- Marketing
- Funding
- Networking
- Absorb into/ realign organisational structure
- Writing up Policy

4.3) *When?*

- Brief situation report to Trustees for meeting 27/1/01 – indicate that work is in progress
- Workshops and discussions January through April 2001
- Proposal based on above to Trustees at April meeting, seeking their approval/response.

*Appendix /over*

## APPENDIX

Before the Spirituality Day, I read the literature supplied, and highlighted a few quotations from three documents written by Faith Lees, which picked out key messages from the other literature, and offered practical guidance for the Spirituality/Personal Growth workshop – *particularly for its implementation and integration into Holton Lee's overall programme.*

I therefore consider them worth rewriting and offering to you to help in the task ahead.

“Holton Lee must be accredited and up-to-date with all the different ways of .....spirituality and counselling .....eclectic approach, not insistence that *our* way is right”.

“There should be one person trusted .....in each field .....so that .....new thinking is assimilated.”

“The faithful environment must hold on to the beliefs of Christianity .....without excluding other religious teaching”

“(There may be an undercurrent of criticism) that we are doing all of Holton Lee for ourselves, and won't go on to enlarge the vision for people with disabilities”

“Sufficient personnel (are required) to work efficiently and gently to produce the ethos .....trained in spiritual and secular methods and respected by local people”.

“The concept of Holton Lee has grown out of the belief that at the centre of each person there is a creative force .....facilitators (should be) experienced in building a person's self-acceptance”.

*Sam Field*

*17 January 2001*

**HOLTON LEE MANAGEMENT GROUP (MG)  
TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Constitution and Duties**

The Management Group, appointed by the full Board of Trustees, will be composed of up to five Trustees or other close supporters of Holton Lee, who are not salaried employees. The Director will always be in attendance.

The Management Group will meet at least every three months. It reports to the full Board of Trustees, all members of which will receive minutes of both Management Group and Development Group meetings. Initial membership will be:

Sarah Omond – Administration PR Marketing  
Peter Bell - Finance  
Bridget Green - H/Resources  
Alan Greening – H/Resources  
Vacant - Fundraising

**PR Marketing**

The day-to-day responsibility for the management of Holton Lee rests with the Director and Holton Lee's salaried employees. The role of the Management Group is to provide, both on its own initiative and in response to matters raised by the Director (or through him by other staff members), the necessary timely decisions and advice to ensure that Holton Lee is run efficiently and as required of a registered UK charity.

The Management Group is authorised to take decisions within the areas of responsibility defined below, subject to a duty to refer to the full Board of Trustees any matters embracing serious financial implications and/or internal or external sensitivities.

**Areas of responsibility**

**Accountability**

- MG will receive written reports from DG and will respond via written report to DG Trustees. MG will ensure that Action Points are sent to the Director for distribution within 7 days of the meeting.



## **Finance**

- Producing both revenue and capital budgets for approval by the full Board of Trustees and thereafter monitoring actual performance against these on a monthly basis.
- Ensuring that financial systems and controls are in place, both to provide prompt and accurate information to the Director and Management Group and to guarantee sound control of all Holton Lee's monies and assets.

## **Fund Raising**

- Agreeing fund-raising priorities up to two years ahead, while noting longer term aspirations; monitoring progress on a bi-monthly basis and formally reviewing priorities at least annually.
- Ensuring that the Fund-raiser is set demanding but achievable targets and is adequately resourced to meet these.

## **Property**

- Ensuring that all buildings owned by Holton Lee are properly maintained and utilized.
- Over-seeing all external and internal aspects of the creation of new buildings from decision to proceed through design to completion.

## **PR/Marketing**

- Promoting widespread public appreciation of the aim and unique qualities of Holton Lee, particularly by potential users and donors.
- Achieving maximum occupancy of residential and usage of non-residential buildings, regularly reviewing the prices charged.

## **Human Resources**

- Recruiting all senior salaried staff
- Agreeing all salary scales and bonuses.
- Approving the Director's staffing levels and deployment

HOLTON LEE DEVELOPMENT GROUP (DG)  
TERMS OF REFERENCE

6

**Constitution and Duties**

The Development Group, appointed by the full board of Trustees, will be composed of representatives from each of the 4 Aspect Groups:

Disability & Care

Creativity & Arts

Environment

Spirituality & Personal Growth

Each Aspect Group will provide no more than 3 representatives, one of whom will be a Trustee. Representatives will be reviewed on an annual basis and may be salaried employees, volunteers or other close supporters of Holton Lee. The Director will always be in attendance.

The Development Group will meet at least every 3 months. Each member will receive reports including matters for discussion from each Aspect Group 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. It will appoint a Chair and Minute Taker from each of the Aspect Groups on a rotating basis. The Minute Taker will ensure that Action Points are sent to the Director for distribution within 7 days of the meeting.

The Development Group reports to the full Board of Trustees, all members of which will receive minutes of both Management Group and Development Group meetings.

The day to day responsibility for the management of Holton Lee rests with the Director and Holton Lee's salaried employees. The Development Group is authorised to take decisions and make recommendations within the following areas:

**Strategy**

**Use of Property**

**PR/ Marketing**

**Human Resources**



## **Accountability**

The Development Group will receive written reports from the Management Group and will report via written report to the Management Group/Trustees subject to a duty to refer to the full Board of Trustees any matters embracing serious financial implications and/or internal or external sensitivities.

The Terms of Reference of the Development Group will be reviewed by the Group on an annual basis.

## **Aims and objectives**

### **Representation**

To ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee has a voice both in the structure of the organisation and in building and implementing the vision.

### **Information**

To ensure that everyone involved in Holton Lee is aware of initiatives taken by all Aspect Groups.

### **Support**

To create a structure which will nurture and encourage mutual support for the work of each Aspect Group.

### **Integration**

To work towards the integration of the activities of all Aspect Groups in such a way as to enable each Group to realise fully their Statement of Intent.

### **Development**

To develop the vision of an integrated centre of excellence.

## CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY ARTICLES

<i>Retreats: time to re-member yourself,</i> (West, 2001)	He discusses how retreats are an act of faith, a trust in the spiritual process, a belief that if we take time out from our daily lives we will experience a deeper sense of ourselves as spiritual beings and re-member ourselves.
<i>How do the Gospel Stories affect us and change our lives?,</i> (Freeman, 2001:2-6)	in which he discusses how the meanings of the stories can affect us and change our sense of our own lives.
<i>The Spiritual Life of People who don't go to Church,</i> (Hay, 2001)	A zoologist by profession, he has recently carried out research into the spiritual life of people who don't go to church. He pointed out that 76% of the national sample admitted to having had a spiritual or religious experience, indicating a 60% rise in a response rate to this subject whilst church attendance has dropped by 20%. He believes that people's sense of the degree of social permission for such experience is changing. Two points emerged in research: everybody's spirituality is unique, not easily fitting into neat pigeonholes and for most it is the "quest mode" on a journey and unclear route. The most common response was a conviction of "something there". There were clear criticisms of the religious institutions, of hypocrisy, bigotry and being out of touch. His research conducted with Rebecca Nye, has showed that, "... a major result of secularisation is that spirituality has become a taboo subject for many people. This privatisation of relational consciousness continues to have severe effects on social cohesion ... spirituality has the greatest difficulty feeding into social and political legislation because it no longer has a widely plausible, common public language. How do we rediscover such a language?" They suggest "... the first step is to engage in simple conversation of a type which leads beyond those aspects of self that are concerned with public image, fitting in with what is assumed to be the dominant world view."
<i>Articles on Theology, Spirituality, Religion: Mapping the Terrain,</i> Professor (Schneiders, 1999)	She discusses this triad which she says is often confusingly equated, overlapped or incorrectly opposed to each other. She believes they are instead closely related and mutually implicating and that it is virtually impossible to really separate them.
<i>Christian Spirituality,</i> (Principe, 1993)	He develops the understanding of the word spirituality from the 5 <sup>th</sup> century onwards and discusses three levels of spirituality as: real or existential level of lived experience; spirituality of groups and varying spiritual traditions and the study of spirituality.
<i>An Informed Spirituality and What is Christian Spirituality?</i> (Downey, 1993: 30-49) and <i>Understanding Christian Spirituality,</i> (Downey, 1997:145-150)	In Chapter 2 he stated that Christian Spirituality is most profitably understood when viewed in the context of the more basic and fundamental human quest for integration of mind, body and soul, a life in the Spirit with the human desire for integration and completion through self-transcending knowledge, freedom and love. He believes that viewing the Christian tradition can provide helpful insights for the task of recognising authentic expressions of spirituality in our own day as we are now faced with the sprawl of contemporary spirituality. In Chapter Seven he concludes that contemporary Christian spirituality needs to be an informed spirituality. He believes signposts will undergo revision as we continue to grow in deeper understanding and fuller appropriation of the presence and action of the Spirit. He concludes by saying, "No doubt our understanding of the spiritual life will grow and develop, especially as we stretch to make enough room for the silence in which true understanding is born. And through which it endures."

<p><i>Spiritual Writing. Contemporary</i>, (Downey, 1993: 917-922)</p>	<p>Basically he points out that "Christian Spirituality" refers to both a lived experience and an academic subject. He points out that there is a more holistic understanding of spirituality today, stressing importance of concrete experience of searching for God, finding appropriate ways to live out one's response within a specific context within which one lives out one's relationships with the other, others and God and the significance of the culture as it shapes these relationships. Thus there is an effort to undercut dualisms. He discusses the search for "authentic self" and suggests that "... any authentic Christian spirituality is intrinsically relational, social and indeed political" with human and spiritual development interrelated and complementary as are prayer and action to be held together. He emphasises the importance of praxis in Christian life and spirituality saying that in contemporary spiritual writing, praxis does not refer to any and all action or practice. "It is the practice of the gospel through which persons and communities do the truth in love freely, and in so doing enable others to do the truth in love freely, thereby participating more fully in the mystery of Christ who is contemplated in Christian prayer. There are also demands of justice for retrieving the riches of the past. He concludes: "... attention is being given to the search for the true self, but with greater appreciation for the complementarity of human and spiritual development. In this quest for the true self, self-scrutiny and the development of critical consciousness vis-à-vis the sources of oppression and injustice go hand in hand, thus related to attempts to find modes of integrating prayer and service through emancipatory praxis appropriate to the urgent demands of the age"</p>
<p><i>New Age Spirituality: a Christian Perspective</i>, (Smith, 2001)</p>	<p>He states that for many people today the New Age is giving them a direction, a label which is used to cover such a wide variety of human interests, speculations, theories and activities, a very complex scene and phenomenon which is easier to say what it is not than what it is. It is a movement without any particular organisation promoting it, there are no leaders or hierarchical structure, no unifying ideology, dogma or accepted body of authoritative texts, no headquarters, membership and it is not a religion and we can't ignore the scene. It has emerged as a contemporary sub-culture and they offer a challenge or alternative to the dominant materialistic, patriarchal paradigm of contemporary western industrialised culture. It offers a way of transformation for individuals and our culture as a whole. The New Age visionaries are convinced we are in a "quantum leap" to the next evolutionary step and so we are living the greatest revolution in history with a spontaneous upheaval of the entire human race with a breakthrough in consciousness with definite signs. They are: increased appreciation of the dignity and worth of human persons, campaigns for justice and peace, abolition of apartheid, writing off debt of poorest countries, sense that we are all citizens of one global village, desire for greater participation, less willing to have our lives manipulated and told what to believe. Scientists are recognising matter cannot be kept separate from spirit since there is a spiritual dimension to everything and an interconnectedness of all things. A trend toward wholeness and healing as a process, with the physical, spiritual, environmental, past and present. Basically he states that the signs of a growing unity evidence the change taking place from seeing the world as a machine but rather as an organism, in a more harmonious way of life, movement toward wholeness, interrelatedness, non-dualism, inclusiveness in a shift of consciousness. He suggests a brief rule of thumb to discern Christian value of the New Age characteristics is to ask oneself: Is it life-enhancing? – to base our judgements on the fruits.</p>
<p><i>Affirming Spirituality</i>. (Worsley, 2000)</p>	<p>Richard, a priest and counsellor, states that spirituality appears under many guises and asks how can we affirm others' spirituality? He referred also to the difference between "religion and spirituality" from a contribution from John Rowan who explains a dichotomy that "legitimate religion" is pre-personal and too fixated on safety, bound up with absolute truth whereas mysticism is personal, less dogmatic and more open to spiritual experience. Worsley states that spirituality is a field of wide-ranging and often contradictory concepts and refers to William West's writing about the transcendental dimension and concludes, "... spirituality is a dimension of our being in which belief and experience interact intricately. We cannot contrast religion with spirituality. There are religious and non-religious spiritualities." He also</p>

	<p>points out that, "... much talk of spirituality has constituted itself in the language of hierarchy." Which he believes instead is best understood in metaphorical terms, including the metaphor of inner and outer. "To affirm others' spirituality involves a careful and emphatic exploration of the depth of their and one's own language and imagery" since language conceals more than it discloses of inner experience so it is unwise to link the lives of many with stereotypical accounts of spirituality. He believes that each person can construe their living and relating in terms of spiritual depth if they are heard with respect and without judgement.</p>
<i>Becoming the Kingdom</i> , (Lees, 1987)	as summarised in the Report
<i>Millennium Christians</i> , (Regan, 2001)	<p>He stated that wisdom and discernment come from God's Spirit speaking from outside the sanctuary and from unexpected places, so we must be attentive to the Spirit as she speaks to us through the young, poor, abused, excluded, deepest desires of people who want to build a society based on shared values, through groupings of the unchurched and through the cry of the earth raped and ravaged by a greedy and unheeding humanity. The times challenge laity to assume leadership as they trust in their experience of God in constructing a different society and elaborate a culture which will question our current consumerism, self-centeredness and crass materialism.</p>
<i>A Spirituality that Transforms</i> , (Wilber, 1997)	<p>He discusses the difference between translation and transformation in relationship to religion and liberation from the separate self. He believes religion can serve the function of radical transformation and liberation at the deepest seat of consciousness itself. He describes creating meaning for the self is a horizontal movement whereas transcending the self is a vertical movement and it offers authenticity as a "transformative spirituality" an authentic spirituality which is revolutionary.</p>
<i>Journey (Growth and Development in Spiritual Life) Reviving the Journey Metaphor</i> , (Byrne, 1993)	<p>Discusses spiritual life as life, movement and growth as a mystery that gradually unfolds and as humans we are wayfarers with this spiritual journey at the heart of it, a human journey directed by the dynamism of the human spirit in communion with the transcendent mystery that pervades all reality. Spirituality concerns itself with how to appropriate and incarnate with the realities of faith in a progressive movement and lifelong process. Contemporary development: "As the science of theology partly develops in dialogue with the philosophies of each generation and culture, so the discipline of spirituality grows in dialogue with the more empirical understandings of human experience in successive cultures in the 20<sup>th</sup> century now often found in the human sciences filtering through to the general public through popular literature, arts and media and self-help groups which includes new recent developments of the transpersonal or spectrum psychology". This new approach insists that the spiritual dimension of life is critical to the human journey and these new theories have considerable impact upon contemporary perception of spiritual growth through what is called the New Age movement. They do offer valuable insights but Judeo-Christian spiritualities must critique their tendency to view the realm of the spiritual as an outgrowth and consequence of healthy psychological development as well as seeming absorption of the individual into an undifferentiated oneness with the cosmos or the divine mystery. He suggests the contemporary view of spiritual formation as one which views the person as a configuration of relationships to self, others, world and the mystery of God. The real journey takes place in the depths of the soul, beyond rational observation and even intuitive apprehension. "The mystery of the incarnation, at the core of our faith, impels us to enter into the full breadth and depth of the human and cosmic journey in all its realms: the psychological, social, cultural, political, economic, ecological and cosmological evolution of history and world. Our personal and communal spiritual journeys involve a commitment to the betterment of creation." The journey is never self-initiated, sustained, fulfilled but is a mystery, a journey with God who empowers at each step.</p>



<p><i>Psychotherapy and Spirituality</i> (West, 2000: 57-61)</p>	<p>He states that many New Agers are Christians who felt their spiritual needs were not being met within the Church and that Christianity has been so over-accommodating to secular society whereas by contrast New Age Spirituality seeks to restore spirituality to the heart of modern life, as a protest at the nineteenth century abandonment by religion of science, cosmology, economics, and health, representing a rejection of the secular, rationalist and materialist tenor of science, consumerism and official Western religion. He states that Northcott believes that New Age Spirituality and Christian pastoral theology share a concern for wholeness and spiritual identity and believes that both were heavily influenced by Carl Rogers. New Age Spirituality is attractive to therapists and clients of humanistic or transpersonal orientation so much so that it appears as if humanistic therapy would be a substitute for religion. One point of connection is that of the focus of personal experiencing, "What Western religions seem to have left out of their teachings is the experiential part for understanding, the opportunity for experiencing myself, so that I may experience the cosmos and the difference between me and you." He states that "The value of New Age Spirituality lies in its focus on the individual and his or her own experience of their spirituality. The downside is that of reinventing the wheel, and of the possibility of a shallow self-centred approach to spirituality." Therapy has become like a religion or a substitute for religion for some people.</p>
<p><i>Psychotherapy and Spirituality, Mapping the Psychospiritual</i>, (West, 2000: 91-99)</p>	<p>He states that counselling and psychotherapy theories tend to ignore people's spiritual nature and development. Some like Wilber, Benner, Chaplin and Fowler do put forward models which do include the spiritual. Benner suggests we can choose to view the psychological as separate from the spiritual or we can see how interwoven the psychological and spiritual are and how often they cannot be separated and thereby address the whole of it as a psychospiritual unity. Wilber and Heron suggest our mature development as human beings includes the spiritual realms and people often will tend towards these realms if not inhibited by their therapists. But he then asks is a new category of helper signified then which will require a change in thinking and a shift in therapist technique. He states that working with the soul requires the helper as advanced guide if we are to work at the level of spirit then often the helper is outside the usually therapeutic mode and is a priest or priestess or sage. Heron warns us not to place too much emphasis on maps, ultimate frameworks, with only a range of provisional models, grounded in each author's developing experiential inquiry in what there is. He adds that if spirituality is to fully play its part then how can the therapist be present to their client's own experiencing of spirituality within their lives, a perspective which is not solved by taking a particular religious stance.</p>
<p><i>Why God is Moving into the Workplace</i> (Midgley, 2002)</p>	<p>He reported that there appears to be a growing phenomenon – the search for spiritual meaning in work. In the US spiritual training courses are big business. In the UK too people are attending the increasing number of personal development courses that explore the limits of human spirituality. At the turn of the millennium people are reconsidering the role of religion in 21<sup>st</sup> century life. He wrote that Dr Taylor, with a research background in psychology and sociology is wary of the assumption that the western world is a secular place and suggests instead that, work organisations are, "our most significant community, replacing institutions such as the church" particularly because of the time and energy spent there. But the appropriation of spiritual trappings by commercial organisations causes tensions, "in combining religious faith with the aim of increased production, greater economic freedom, and happiness based on consumption, workplace spirituality represents an attempt to reconcile potentially opposing influences." His on going research is now focusing on two key questions: can spiritual development be used to create a sense of vocation in an employee, maximise their performance at work or instil a sense of working for the common good; also could such courses involve unnecessary intrusion into people's personal lives and do they need to be regulated to prevent such violation?</p>

<p><i>Management or Professional Development?</i> (Critten, 1998)</p>	<p>In his paper he argues the case for an emphasis on “professional” rather than “management” development on the basis of changing views on work and the organisational context within which it takes place. He includes implications of the “new sciences” (chaos theory and quantum physics) on management and organisations of the future. His conclusion is that changing relationships between employees and organisations will require traditional views on management to be rethought considering non-linear systems, suggesting organisations might be prepared to “play at the edge of chaos” and thereby change their infrastructures with managers as “context makers”. They in turn would be required to know-in-action and learn-in-action in a “context shared by a community of practitioners” where people are linked together by relationships, integrated together by trust in covenantal relationship</p>
<p><i>Retreats, Spirituality and Sustainability</i> - John Smith – Shell Better Britain Campaign Information Sheets No 201 &amp; 206 June 1999</p>	<p>As described in the Report</p>
<p><i>Setting Up a Sacred Land Project</i> – Jane Rew- Shell Better Britain Campaign – April 1999, Information Sheet No 174</p>	<p>As described in the Report</p>

## BRIEFING SHEET: QUESTIONS TO ASK IN INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Considering the Action Research process since Spring 1999

1. At individual and personal levels of experience of the research process
  - i. share what emerged for you
  - ii. what have you learned
  - iii. what effect that then had – what change
  - iv. what implication for the future
2. At Group level (interface with each other) of experience of the research process
  - i. What surfaced for us
  - ii. What did we learn
  - iii. What effect that had on us – what change
  - iv. What implications for the future
3. At Organisational level of experience of the research process
  - i. what surfaced for the organisation
  - ii. what did it learn
  - iii. what effect that had on the organisation – what change
  - iv. what implications for the future
4. Audiences – outcomes and fruit
 

What audiences can we identify

  - ii. What can we share of what surfaced
  - iii. What can we share about what we learned
  - iv. What can we share about the effect on the organisational changes
  - v. What other implications for the future.
  - vi. How can we share with the wider audiences

### Other thoughts to use?

1. what difference might there have been to Holton Lee if we hadn't had this research process?
2. How far off are we from the original founding vision?
3. How will we fill any gaps if there is an inconsistency?
4. How can we establish our practices to ensure that they are kept healthy and authentic?
5. What are the key requirements and guideposts?

Lucy was emphasizing that the questions need to be very focused about what I want then to write because the purpose of my inquiry is to get meaningful and tangible data in this last phase of data collection. I need precise material and need therefore to be clear about how I can use what is provided, so I can use it easily in appropriate ways

Get them to help me out with reliability and generalisability

She suggested that the sequence and composition of the questions could influence the shape and structure of the book, and then the data can easily be corroborated and to relate together ie that the 2 sets of transcripts are exploring the same theme from different perspectives

We talked about the 4 themes of personal, group, organisation and audience with overarching questions

### This Doctorate requires:

The 2 key things are: impact on the organisation and the transferability, generalisability and reliability

An abstraction of the process of raw data from the group – ie abstracting it to produce theory

To focus on the organisation especially is especially important for the final write up – to link with audiences.

## PROFORMA TO USE FOR WRITING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BOOK

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Please find attached a form to fill in, using the space below each section to write in. Add additional pages as necessary and hand written is okay with me. The suggested structure is the same as we used in the interviews and so you can use those same thoughts as you fill in the form. There is no word limit so feel free; the more you write the better really. Your contribution will remain in your own language and voice.

---

### **General Points to keep in mind as you reflect and write:**

#### Each of you ...:

- Has particular angles
- Has particular issues
- Is a particular person
- Has a different nature of knowledge seen through different eyes and experience with its own implications.
- will have learned different things where tacit knowledge was made explicit in the process

#### As you write keep in mind the consideration of what makes Holton Lee a place of spirituality within the categories below and your place within them:

1. management structure
2. guests
3. environment including inside the buildings
4. staff and volunteers

#### The idea is that the research was progressive and has evolved with consideration of:

1. what happened to **me**
2. what happened to **us**
3. what do **we** have to share
4. with **them**

#### and incorporates an understanding of Action Research which considers:

1. What happened – what is the story, which evolved? With me/us?
2. What sense can we make of the story and what happened – what application can “we” make?
3. So what? – what have we got to share with “them”?

#### and these aspects are further incorporated within the book under the Section headings of:

1. The Then
2. The Now
3. The Tomorrow

Please keep in mind that this Doctorate requires the development and understanding of 2 key things:

1. The impact on the organisation, which this research has had.
2. Identifying how we can transfer and relate the general findings/principles of what we have learned to others.

I will also be analysing the interviews in order to produce theory; in this way the same content will be seen from two different angles and perspectives.

While you write can you also think about a title for the book. I will collate all suggestions so we can decide together as a group.

Please can you give me your contribution by **mid February**? If you can't manage please get in touch and we can discuss alternative plans.

## **BOOK OUTLINE**

As you write please also keep in mind the research question which is:

***“How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis?”***

and that the Doctorate is described as a DProf (Spirituality praxis in a voluntary sector Charity)

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

I will write this.

### **2. THE “THEN” –**

- a) **The founding vision** of Holton Lee (also using Faith's book synopsis and 5-20 year plans etc)

Write whatever you want to about the founding vision

### **3. THE GROUP ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS – what happened – the story?**

#### **b.) Personal change and experience in the research process: The “I/me”**

Write something about what “you” learned individually.

- i. what emerged for you
- ii. what have you learned
- iii. what effect that then had – what change
- iv. what implication for the future

#### **c.) Group change and experience in the research process: The “we”**

Write something about what happened in the group process and what “we” learned.

- i. What surfaced for us
- ii. What did we learn
- iii. What effect that had on us – what change
- iv. What implications for the future

#### 4. THE “NOW”

**d.) Organisational change and experience of the research process:  
The “us”**

Write something about what you understand happened in the organisation as a result of “our” research process and what application has been made for us?

- i. what surfaced for the organisation
- ii. what did it learn
- iii. what effect that had on the organisation – what change
- iv. what implications for the future

**e.) Present Day Practice: making sense of what happened**

Please write something of your understanding of our present day practice as an application and result of our research process during the past 2-3 years, under the following headings.

- i. Write about what our understanding of Spirituality is and include in your thinking our statement and understanding of our Christian roots.
  - ii. Spirituality in relationship to: disability, environment, art at Holton Lee; what interface with the other aspects present and operative?
  - iii. Love and power in the organisation as context; what you note and experience in the organisation.
  - iv. Relationships – between staff, trustees, volunteers and guests and how we manage conflict.
  - v. Science and quantum understanding. – any thoughts which you have.
- Give examples of where “spirituality” is happening, actively operative and present?
  - Identify what is already working successfully and how can we build on that.
  - And highlight any gaps identifying where these qualities not present and why.



- And how we can remedy.

## 5. THE “TOMORROW” – so what?

### f). Outcomes – with on-going Audiences “them”

It is important to identify which audiences we think can benefit from our work, so please indicate those you think could.

- i. Share about what surfaced in our research process.
- ii. Share about what we learned.
- iii. Share about the effect and impact on the organisational changes and development
- iv. Write about any specific implications in understanding and developing spirituality within the organisation for Holton Lee’s future?
- v. Write about what and how we can we share with the wider audiences ie what are the key qualities and requirements for spirituality praxis needed in order to keep spirituality operative and healthy at Holton Lee?

## 6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

**Questions to consider especially as they relate to our Mission statement:**

- i. What difference might there have been to Holton Lee if we hadn’t had this research process?
- ii. How close are we to the original founding vision? Is it consistent with Faith’s papers and present ethos and quality of life?
- iii. How have we and will we fill any gaps where there is an inconsistency so that we can be the centre of excellence?

- iv. How can we establish our practices to ensure that they are kept healthy and authentic? What do we still need to do?
- v. How do we monitor and keep the practice healthy and keep a finger on the pulse?

**Any other comments.**

## THE 'THEN'-

ALAN GREENING

### a) The founding vision of Holton Lee

Holton Lee was founded by the Post Green Community, which is a lay ecumenical Christian community established for nearly thirty years.

I first came into contact with Post Green at one of their Spring Bank Holiday Camps, which were held for many years so that all who came could share the worship, the teaching on Christian living and have the opportunity of experiencing just a taste of community life during the three or four days of the camp.

On that first occasion, I really did not want to go and was angry at being there. Although a convinced and evangelical Christian, I expected to be exposed to the 'pressures of organised religion' and to be told what I ought to be doing and how I ought to be living my life as a Christian.

Instead, I found that I was accepted for who I was and how I felt, without actual or implied criticism. In fact, I felt really loved unconditionally by all members of the community with whom I came in contact. There was a reality and freshness about their Christian faith, in that they were living it out in concern and care for not only the members of their community, but also for all with whom they came in contact. The community was known as a place of refuge and spiritual, emotional and sometimes also physical healing. The unconditional love of God for all was the motivational force in their communal and societal life and there came with it a strong desire that people should be free to become the persons they were intended to be.

During future years of contact with the Post Green Community at many camps and on other occasions, I became thrilled with the authenticity of their Christian teaching which was often radical, had spiritual power but was also practical, based upon experience, and had been tested in their living and work together and came not from an isolated community, but one earthed in society.

It was from this background that came the founding vision for Holton Lee as a short term residential centre, with its Mission of "...empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality."

It was a privilege to be in close contact with the Post Green Community as the Vision for Holton Lee became clearer and they got to grips with the practicalities of planning, fund raising and promotional activities. It was intended that the future life and work of the Community would be centred around this project, which was later given the name of Holton Lee, which is a combination of the name of the area and that of the Lee family. Sir Tom and Lady Faith Lees had been founder members and leaders of the Post Green Community and were, with others, holders of the vision for Holton Lee and donated the land upon which the centre was to be built.

As the work progressed to the building stage, it became clear that people with qualifications and experience would be necessary as Care Manager and Assistants, which reduced the opportunities for members of the Community to be actively involved in the residential centre. Understandably, this caused some considerable pain and heart searching, as it had been thought that the centre would provide work and purpose for many members of the Community.

In addition, it raised the question as to how the ethos of the Post Green Community could be maintained at Holton Lee if it was now necessary to employ those who had not been a part of or exposed to that ethos. 'Equal opportunities' required of Holton Lee as employers needed to be taken into account.

The whole process of making the residential centre a reality created enormous pressures on the community life and interrelationships within Post Green Community and necessitated considerable effort and real sacrifice in order to do so. The Vision had to be reviewed from time to time, but the heart of it was never lost.

## **b) Personal change and experience in the research process: The "I/me"**

I approached membership of the 'Spirituality' Group with some reservations, which I kept to myself.

These personal reservations centred in particular upon:-

- i) Anticipated difficulty for me in trying to understand an intellectual approach to 'spirituality', taking into account my own spiritual experience to date and my own personality, which is weighted toward feelings - heart more than head.
- ii) Concern that there could be theological dissension within the Group, with the potential for causing distrust and ill feeling.
- iii) The possibility that opinions in the Group could be liberal and be a challenge to my own Christian faith, producing a defensive response from myself, yet at the same time I wanted to be open.

What emerged for me was that membership of the Group became increasingly important to me as we struggled together to encapsulate in a statement what is spirituality at Holton Lee and how to raise the awareness of it for Trustees, Staff, Volunteers and Guests.

I learned that I do not have to understand all terminology used on the subject of spirituality in order to have an intellectually valid comment. As we spent time together, we learned to listen with respect for each others opinions and a real desire to understand one another, without being competitive and without anyone trying to dominate the Group. Thus in a small way, perhaps we began within the Group to live out something of what spirituality is at Holton Lee.

For me, the Group became a 'safe place' in which to explore this subject. At the same time, my attitude toward my own spirituality was becoming more open as I recovered from open heart surgery, accepted my own mortality and spent a great deal more time walking in the countryside at home and at Holton Lee. In particular, bird and deer watching at Holton Lee through the seasons created a sense of joy and wonder at the beauty of creation all around me and I felt integrated with it - a sense of 'wholeness'. Instead of my spirituality being focussed primarily on Church, it expanded, without me feeling that my Christian faith was under threat. I was also attending a course on Spiritual Direction, and its emphasis of seeing God in all things further loosened up my approach to spirituality per se and especially at Holton Lee

The Group and personal experiences became interrelated and personal growth was facilitated!

This led to an expectation within me of seeing God in new ways and in everyone and everything at Holton Lee and that the simple was often the most profound and of immense value.

I hope that the changes which gradually took place in me were fed into the Group as we continued our discussions.

### **c) Group change and experience in the research process: The "we"**

After a few Group meetings, the Group became convinced that it was important to prepare a statement of what we understood spirituality at Holton Lee to be, and for this statement to be considered by all those involved in the work of Holton Lee, with the objective of gaining its acceptance, increasing awareness of the spirituality at Holton Lee, and encouraging people to recognise their part in it and to own it.

It was perhaps harder than we had imagined to capture in writing what in many ways is abstract, but the process of doing so proved a worthwhile discipline. However, when it also became clear that we should need a policy for spirituality at Holton Lee, based upon the statement not yet prepared, we decided we needed the help of an outside facilitator and a consultation day was arranged.

This proved the final stimulus in preparing the statement and policy document and although all members of the Group contributed, it proved impossible to write collectively and the final preparation was done by two or three for Group approval.

During the preparation of these papers, we were surprised that our common understanding of spirituality at Holton Lee was greater than may have been expected.

We learned that even though it needed to be recorded in print, spirituality at Holton Lee is something that is best understood by being 'lived out', particularly in the relationships between members of staff, trustees and volunteers and between staff and guests. We concluded that it is something more likely to be caught than learned and that communication on the subject in writing within the organisation needs to be in the simplest terms possible to encourage interest and acceptance by the readers.

The Group has accepted that increasing awareness of spirituality at Holton Lee and earthing it is not a once only event, but an ongoing process which will need to be reviewed and revisited at intervals throughout the future.

The statement on Spirituality at Holton Lee is as follows:-

**"At Holton Lee, we believe spirituality to be both personal and social, challenging us to reclaim connections with ourselves, others, the sacred and our world.**

**It is inclusive of the widest possible range of human experience, thus integrating body, mind and spirit and facilitating personal growth.**

**Such growth comes from discovering our inner potential and growing into wholeness of life, recognising our interdependence with one another and the world we belong to."**

**d) Organisational change and experience of the research process: The "us".**

One result of the Groups' recognition of the need to increase awareness of spirituality at Holton Lee was the time allocated to this subject at Board of Trustees meetings and related to this was a consultation day for the Trustees and Director, with an outside facilitator. The outcome of this day was a reorganisation of the management and administration structure of Holton Lee to allow greater involvement of staff and volunteers in the centres' development and management and also trustees' more active participation in all aspects of the work at Holton Lee.

This structure is intended to encourage shared responsibility and power and a sense of serving the organisation and each other.

Holton Lee is considered to have four aspects to its work :-

Arts and Creativity  
The Environment  
Disability and Care  
Personal Growth and Spirituality

The importance of each has always been recognised, but there has now been increasing awareness of the multi-faceted whole that is Holton Lee and that Spirituality undergirds the whole.

Spirituality at Holton Lee cannot be separated from its Mission and Vision statements and needs to be taken into account when working out the practical application of these statements

As part of the process of increasing awareness of spirituality at Holton Lee, the Group organised a half day to which all Staff, Volunteers and Trustees were encouraged to attend. This was well attended and began with a shared lunch, and an introduction from some Group members, followed by time for individual reflection and group discussion. There was an opportunity for the Staff, Volunteers and Trustees to meet in their separate groups and to discuss how spirituality at Holton Lee impacted on them as a group and what action may ensue.

For example, the Trustees identified the following:-

The importance of a 'flat' non-hierarchical organisational structure, with no 'them and us'.

The need to ensure an environment and ambience through which the Mission and Vision of Holton Lee may be enhanced without being an imposition on those involved.

That interrelationships should not be simply functional and that ways needed to be found to strengthen relationships between all involved in the work of Holton Lee.

A blend of 'visionaries' and 'doers' is important at Holton Lee.



At the close of the day, there was a strong sense that Holton Lee was emerging as a community of people.

Loving relationships are an essential expression of spirituality at Holton Lee, evidenced in the importance of :-

Respecting each other

Being willing to listen to each other with the desire to understand

Recognising each others intrinsic worth

Accepting our differences

As these relationships are worked at and maintained, so residential guests and visitors benefit from the atmosphere thus created.

It is clear that although Holton Lee may be described as a secular organisation and not a religious one, the recognition and nurturing of spirituality is essential and needs to be taken into account when engaging staff, accepting volunteers and appointing trustees.

It has been recognised within the organisation that responsibility for the ongoing nurture of spirituality at Holton Lee should reside with a recognised 'Personal Growth and Spirituality ' Group.

**e) Present Day Practice: making sense of what happened**

i) The Groups' understanding of Spirituality is recorded in our statement appearing earlier in this paper and is implicit in both the Mission and Vision statements of Holton Lee. This, together with the spirituality policy document, is now a reference point for all involved with Holton Lee and will need to be revisited at regular intervals.

At Holton Lee, I believe that there is an increased looking for, and expectation of seeing God in all things. There is belief in the equal value of each individual, whether working ~~at~~ or staying at Holton Lee, and the importance of their contribution to its life. It is working for the best for both workers and guests.

It is seen primarily in the way in which people relate to each other, working as a number of small teams within one big team, without an imposed management.

Without the ethos of 'love and care', spirituality at Holton Lee would be an empty phrase!

Although not all at Holton Lee would claim to be of the Christian faith, most acknowledge the spiritual element, and there is an acceptance of and respect for our differences.

It is not possible to get away from the Christian roots of Holton Lee, founded as it was by Post Green, an ecumenical Christian community. However, in the Christian thinking over 25 years ago this community was radical rather than rigid in its approach to spiritual matters and the responsibility of Christians to be involved in society and was visionary in its outlook. These are the roots from which Holton Lee has sprung and still have a considerable influence upon the way in which it works, although involved members of the community are now few.

One of the benefits of meeting as a Group has been the growing conviction that in our endeavour to be inclusive and not exclusive, we should not be ashamed of our specifically Christian roots. To do so would be a denial of the truth and would be lacking in integrity.

As we have met, related, discussed and debated, and tried to raise awareness of spirituality, I have been surprised at how much common ground we have with each other in the Group and with so many others involved with Holton Lee. The question is - why should I be surprised? Why not expect it?

ii) Mention has already been made of the four aspects of the work at Holton Lee and their interrelationship. Until comparatively recently, this was probably more theoretical than real, but now representatives of all four meet regularly as a Development Group, where information is exchanged on the activity of each, any 'overlap' recognised, and there is the opportunity for all to contribute ideas to any aspect, regardless of what aspect they represent themselves.

As a result of the Group having prepared a statement and policy on Spirituality, each of the other three aspect groups is reviewing its own and relating it to Holton Lee's Mission and Vision statements. There is still a lot to be done in this area, including the preparation of an addendum to each of the policies which will reflect the understanding of the way in which they should impact upon each other.

It is also proposed that over a period of time, each of the other three aspect groups will hold a consultation day for all at Holton Lee, with the purpose of improving understanding of the objectives of each and enhancing the sense of community that emerged from the spirituality awareness raising day.

It will need persistent effort to ensure that the four aspects do not become separate entities, but are part of a clearly identifiable whole, whilst retaining their own particular emphasis.

iii) I have already referred to the prime importance of loving relationships between those who work at Holton Lee and toward those who come as guests.

This is probably best seen in the loving concern offered by staff members on the residential side of the work, where they are most involved with guests who come to stay. The majority of these guests are disabled, but I see no evidence of pity in the care offered, and neither do I see it imposed from a position of physical or mental superiority, but each individual's needs are assessed and catered for, whilst the guest remains in control of the degree of assistance which they require. Unnecessary dependency is discouraged. Each guest is encouraged to make use of the facilities of Holton Lee, but without pressure to do so. This attitude is one which is encouraged through training and Holton Lee's adoption of the social rather than medical model of disability.

It is also seen in the open management style of the Director and the team work of the staff.

iv) It would be too easy to paint a rosy picture of relationships between staff, volunteers, trustees and guests at Holton Lee, which would reflect the intention rather than the reality. Conflict does occur at times, either through a difference of opinion on what has or should be done and their relative priorities, or simply irritation and confrontation between different personalities.

Although the aim is a non-hierarchical management structure, there are a few times when the intercession of someone seen to have authority is required. At other times, the conflict may not come into the open because it is either not recognised or is recognised but avoided, perhaps through embarrassment on the part of those concerned or fear of being seen to rock the boat. If it occurs as a result of work pressure it is usually seen for what it is and not blown up out of context and is then returned to when 'cooling' has occurred. As relationships strengthen, the already slight incidence of real conflict should reduce, as those involved apply the spiritual principles of loving relationships outlined earlier, such as respect, listening with a desire to understand etc. However, when time allows it may be worth considering a training session on resolving conflict.

One of the major problems for Holton Lee is trying to raise income to cover the majority if not all of the expenditure and this has repercussions upon the number of staff which the organisation can afford, although never in the area where it could impair the care given to guests. Shortage of staff and the pressure of the volume of work can understandably mean that relationships during working hours may have to be objectives focussed, with little time for relating in other ways. In these circumstances, it requires a positive effort to take time to ease back for a short while and make time for talk of a more personal nature or the opportunity taken for out of hours socialising. The latter does have the danger of some relationships being closer than others because of common interests or geographical location, and needs to be recognised as some may otherwise be left out.

v) This is where my intellectual understanding fails me and I have no thoughts to offer!

## 5) THE "TOMORROW" - so what?

### f) Outcomes - with on-going Audiences "them"

I believe that there are a number of audiences who can benefit from our work as a Group researching spirituality at Holton Lee.

i) Spirituality' is increasingly recognised in secular organisations as being important and our journey as a Group in trying to embed spirituality in a practical way will resonate with similar difficulties which they are experiencing and may give valuable insights to the approach which can be made.

Other Christian based organisations may be struggling with how to be inclusive of all without losing their own integrity, and will welcome the encouragement which our Holton Lee experience can offer.

Church organisations may also welcome a book on this subject, as many are attempting to look at spirituality as more than what in the past may have been described as a religious experience.

There are those whose field of study is spirituality and our work is another aspect of the subject which will be of interest, especially as it is written as a result of experience and not theory.

Perhaps regardless of the subject, there is also the validity of our experience of working and developing together as a research group and the impact which this has had upon us as individuals and collectively.

It will also be of importance to Staff, Trustees and Volunteers working at Holton Lee, as a reference which will have many points to which they can relate from their own experience. Guests will also find it of interest as it will help to give meaning to the experience they have at Holton Lee. The Spirituality Statement and Policy are now available to all as a declaration of spirituality at Holton Lee.

Prior to this Group experience, I doubt if we would have thought of some of the potential audiences above, but as the work progressed, so our anticipation of the audience potential widened.

ii) I believe that one of the things we have learned from our joint experience is that the reality at the finishing point may be far removed from the expectation when starting, but that this is how it should be. The Group journey of discovery, the process itself, may be as important as the end product and the personal growth which may take place for its members is considerable and exciting.

iii) The true impact of the Groups' work may never be fully known and/or measurable. Although endeavouring to record in print what is spirituality at Holton Lee and how to embed it in the life and activities of the organisation, in my opinion it still remains a subject which has much in it which is abstract and an element of 'mystery'.

*To try to tie it down rigidly in 'tablets of stone' would be to lose its very essence, as it is alive and must be free to develop as the Spirit of God wishes it.* Spirituality is primarily with in the people of Holton Lee, enhanced by the beauty and accessibility of the land and its flora and fauna. This has been recognised in a new way through the Groups' work, and the organisational changes reflect the desire to acknowledge and maximise the contributions of all involved, with the importance of creating space to listen to each other, accepting our differences, whilst still being efficient in any decision making process.

It could be asked whether any structural changes been simply the result of the application of purely secular current good management practice or have they come about as the result of personal growth and spirituality affecting the decisions?

Personally, I do not think that this can be answered definitively, as it is impossible to separate the secular and the spiritual at Holton Lee and this was recognised by the Group during its discussions. Therefore, decisions which are made about the structure of the organisation will be a composite of all that is in the life and work of the individuals involved in the decision making process, but as result of the work of the Group spirituality should now be having a greater influence.

At the time of writing, a new building has been completed, which will provide rooms which will be used for various meetings as part of the work of the four aspects of Holton Lee, including Spirituality. This will also give the opportunity for businesses, churches, and other organisations to use the rooms for their own purposes, and in so doing be exposed to the spirituality that is at Holton Lee, both in its people and its land.

iv) The identification and understanding of spirituality which already exists within the organisation has not been easy for the Group. We have not wished to impose upon others what could have been limited by the interpretation made by six individuals and a statement on spirituality which would have been a compromise made by us in order to come to a conclusion. However, it has been a process which evolved as we continued to meet and exchange observations made and experiences whilst at Holton Lee.

This must be an ongoing process. Spirituality at Holton Lee is alive and clearly evident in many ways, and its development may need to be a gentle and continuous nurturing of where it is already embedded, rather than any dramatic change in approach. The analogy of a plant may be appropriate, with its apparent fragility, being subject to lack of water, excessive cold and heat etc., yet with an inherent strength that has the power to break through and thrive when encouraged by the right treatment.

To oversee and facilitate this nurturing process, the Group believes it necessary in the near future for Holton Lee to employ a person who would have the overall responsibility for development of spirituality at Holton Lee.

v) Some of what we may offer to a wider audience regarding the key qualities and requirements for a healthy spirituality are:-

Acknowledge that spirituality is certainly present

Look for it everywhere, including in the most unexpected persons and places

It must be owned by those in the organisation and cannot be imposed

To be profound, prepare to be simple

Do not miss the important by concentrating on the dramatic

As you work at it, be prepared to be changed yourself

Be honest and open with each other

Do not be ashamed of who you are and where you come from, and what your opinions are, but be prepared to move on

Do not set statements and policies in 'tablets of stone', but leave room for change

Recognise that spirituality is a living entity

Spirituality needs to be lived out in order to be valid

It needs continuous and gentle nurturing

It needs to be reflected in all of the organisations' structure and activities in order to maintain integrity



## **6. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

### **Questions to consider, especially as they relate to our Mission statement;**

i) It is hard to say what may have happened to Holton Lee if the Group had not been involved in its research process, but some informed speculation may be made.

I am of the opinion that over a period of time, the ethos of Holton Lee would have become frayed at the edges, until it may have finally become unrecognisable.

The Mission and Vision statements would probably have remained, but would have lacked muscle and flesh - light weight in practice and gradually being eroded by the 'necessary' rather than acting as a motivating force.

Spirituality would have remained at Holton Lee, but with little recognition and relatively dormant.

The sense of Community at Holton Lee would not have been identified and developed.

Personal growth for a number involved at Holton Lee would not have taken place.

ii) When looking at Lady Faith Lee's founding vision, much has been achieved and in my opinion little has been sacrificed in principle. The relative present lack of the Post Green Community's involvement with Holton Lee was not anticipated at the outset and for me this is a sadness, but it does not take away the fact that the Community caused Holton Lee to come into being and that this was the result of the quality of their life together, as outlined from my experience of the Community in the introduction to this paper.

There is a great deal to do before Holton Lee becomes the 'centre of excellence' which Faith envisaged, but what has been achieved to date does accurately reflect her vision regarding the quality of life which would be needed to sustain mission.

iii) Faith's vision of Holton Lee becoming a 'centre of excellence' will probably take a great deal longer than she or any of us anticipated then or now, but is still achievable. I do not think that there are significant inconsistencies at present, but so much will depend upon the finances to employ more suitable, experienced and qualified staff to build up 'strength in depth', and also to be able to afford additional accommodation.

We will always have the challenge to sacrifice quality for quantity and be tempted to take short cuts to achieve resolution of problems, thus forfeiting our integrity.

The overt presence of the Christian faith is probably not as evident at Holton Lee as faith may have envisaged, but the absence of a strong Post Green Community presence and the need to provide equal opportunities of employment have brought this about.

We will always have the challenge to sacrifice quality in order to gain quantity.

iv) We still need to develop all of the four aspects of Holton Lee, especially Arts and Creativity and Spirituality, without losing the impetus on the other two - a little like keeping plates spinning.

It is so important that the sense of Community at Holton Lee is encouraged so that people there may affirm each other in who they are and what they are doing and be encouraged in it.

Revisiting Vision and Mission statements and policy documents is essential to keeping the work fresh in peoples minds.

v) In order to monitor the situation and to keep the practice healthy, it will need a Group such as the one at present, together with a person who has the specific responsibility for doing the further development spirituality at Holton Lee. Such a person would require considerable people skills, the ability to create strong relationships and have an enthusiasm for the Mission and Vision of Holton Lee and the ability to contribute effectively to all four aspects of its work.

In view of the importance of recognising the significance of Holton Lee's christian roots, I believe it will be vital that such a person is of the Christian faith, whilst being aware of and open to spirituality in a broader sense.

As you write please also keep in mind the research question which is:

**"How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis?"**

and that the Doctorate is described as a DProf (Spirituality praxis in a voluntary sector Charity)

JEAN GREENING

## 1. INTRODUCTION

I will write this.

## 2. THE "THEN" -

- a) **The founding vision of Holton Lee** (also using Faith's book synopsis and 5-20 year plans etc)

Write whatever you want to about the founding vision

The vision of H.L. came from Lady Faith Lees and the Post Green Community, as a place that would carry on the ethos that was the foundation of the P.G. community.

This was based on acceptance of all, and loving concern expressed in hospitality, caring, counselling & spiritual guidance.

Also being prophetic in Christian teaching - mainly done at Conference Camps held on 'Holton Lee' land.

So H.L. was to be the ongoing expression of the Community. A place of refuge and discovery - a place that was fully accessible, a place where all aspects of life would be experienced - a place that would integrate physical, spiritual & emotional aspects of people's lives.

This would be expressed through caring, art work, environmental appreciation and spiritual awareness, and so enable people to discover a fuller life.

### 3. THE GROUP ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS – what happened – the story?

#### b.) Personal change and experience in the research process: The "I/me"

Write something about what "you" learned individually.

- i. what emerged for you
- ii. what have you learned
- iii. what effect that then had – what change
- iv. what implication for the future

As P.G. community became less involved in H.L. it seemed necessary that a group should hold on to the vision and ethos, and consider how this might be worked out. The practical aspects of H.L. e.g. caring of guests, arts and land management were being put into action – the spiritual area was more difficult to define.

I began to see that 'Spirituality' was a larger subject than I had previously understood it to be. My spirituality had been based on my Christian experience, but others coming and working at H.L. didn't necessarily have the same background, but they recognised H.L. was a special place that 'touched' them.

I realised that awareness of sp. started in a lot of people by simply a sense of awe in the landscape, seeing birds & animals in natural surroundings – having experiences they hadn't had before. Seeing people changing their life direction, by 'opening their eyes' and seeing the world differently.

The relationships between guests, staff & volunteers have encouraged me. By accepting other people's skills, their lives have been given a fullness.

These relationships have begun to form a community at H.L. and an awareness that there is a spiritual element underpinning all that is done – whether recognised or not – this is exciting.

To build on this sense of community is important – for everyone to feel 'part of' and involved, and for me to meet people where they are and try to discern the spirit within them.

### c.) Group change and experience in the research process: The "we"

Write something about what happened in the group process and what "we" learned.

- i. What surfaced for us
- ii. What did we learn
- iii. What effect that had on us – what change
- iv. What implications for the future

The need to try and define spirituality, to come to a common understanding. We came from different backgrounds and traditions, so a lot of talkup was necessary.

We learned to listen to each other, and appreciate the difference. Recognised each other skills as we tried to write the policy document. Learned to trust one another. Broadened our understanding through Carolyn's papers & research.

As the group gelled we were able to make decisions more quickly. Also the more we talked, the more questions were raised. This made us look deeper into many areas, and the need to spend time on just one subject.

As we feel this group holds the 'vision' of 'H'. We need to lead the way in Awareness Days, and to develop a sense of community amongst staff, volunteers and Trustees.

#### 4. THE "NOW"

##### d.) Organisational change and experience of the research process: The "us"

Write something about what you understand happened in the organisation as a result of "our" research process and what application has been made for us?

- i. what surfaced for the organisation
- ii. what did it learn
- iii. what effect that had on the organisation – what change
- iv. what implications for the future

In producing a Policy Statement, it has encouraged other aspects of H.L. to do the same.

We were able to influence other committees, ~~as~~ through individuals from our group, being part of management, Trustees, and Staff.

H.L. in general has been made more aware of the spiritual dimension.

Group has pulled the H.L. community together and helped it realise we are all part of a whole.

This community needs to be encouraged & developed.

Need to organise the basis for retreats, guidance and counselling



**e.) Present Day Practice: making sense of what happened**

Please write something of your understanding of our present day practice as an application and result of our research process during the past 2-3 years, under the following headings.

- i. Write about what our understanding of Spirituality is and include in your thinking our statement and understanding of our Christian roots.

We believe that spirituality to be both personal & social.  
An integration of body mind and spirit.

Discovering our inner potential and coming into fullness of life.

This understanding came from our Christian faith  
and the ethos of Post Green Community.

We recognise the teaching of Jesus was for the  
fullness of life for individuals, and spreading into society to  
change it.

- ii. Spirituality in relationship to: disability, environment, art at Holton Lee; what interface with the other aspects present and operative?

In caring for the disabled, love and acceptance is shown,  
which sets people free to be themselves.

Art encourages us to see the world differently, and to  
be creative, putting us in touch with the Creator.

The environment is a source of wonder and peace,  
& enables people to look outside themselves, but also  
get in touch with their inner self.

Recognise that spirituality underpins all aspects  
of H.L.

iii. Love and power in the organisation as context; what you note and experience in the organisation.

I sense ~~of~~ a lot of goodwill amongst people, willingness to give of their time to help.

Caring love to the guests at the Barn has impressed me, also guests caring for each other.

Can be the danger for each dept. to be a power base, but the director seems to be in touch with all.

Trustees have final power - need for some of them to be more involved, sometimes their decisions are not in agreement with general feeling.

iv. Relationships - between staff, trustees, volunteers and guests and how we manage conflict.

Some personality clashes - need for more communication and understanding & willingness to listen.

Confrontation tends to be avoided, therefore resentment can grow.

Trustees can seem too remote, although getting better

Guests are appreciative of care, and volunteers are also impressed - much laughter in Barn.

Generally seems to be a friendly atmosphere.

v. Science and quantum understanding. – any thoughts which you have.

- Give examples of where “spirituality” is happening, actively operative and present?

Appreciation of environment - lifting of spirits.

Care in Barn - love chain

Agape - focussing on Jesus.

Art - which speaks to the Senses.

occasional Retreats.

- Identify what is already working successfully and how can we build on that.

Care in the Barn - maybe 'befrienders' calling in to talk or to take people out in buggy or chair.

Agape - led by P.G. community.

Art - Dob Hands etc. more exhibitions of art.  
studios to be built. Awareness Day on this aspect.

Individual Retreats - need to make Ash Tree cottage more habitable, and then market it.

- And highlight any gaps identifying where these qualities not present and why.

Workshops on personal growth not available yet. - No premises  
(Opening Faith House will address this problem).

Personel to run workshops, quiet days, retreats.

Co-ordinator to oversee this work.

Counselling & retreat giving - private place.

- And how we can remedy.

Faith House opening will provide premises.

~~Raise~~ write job description for co-ordinator.

Raise money for above - then advertise.

check suitable people for counsellors & retreat givers

Set aside a counselling room.

Refurbish Ash Tree Cottage.

## 5. THE "TOMORROW" - so what?

### 9. Outcomes - with on-going Audiences "them"

It is important to identify which audiences we think can benefit from our work, so please indicate those you think could.

H.L. community - staff - trustee, volunteers  
Churches.

Community projects  
Justice & peace movements  
'green' groups

#### i. Share about what surfaced in our research process.

Need for much talking together to help us verbalise  
our thoughts and to understand each other.

Our understanding grew as we worked together.

#### ii. Share about what we learned.

- That spirituality is underpinning every part of H.L.
- Need to raise the awareness of others
- Such a group was necessary to focus on what we are doing & looking at future.
- That communication to other aspects of H.L. is vital.
- That we are already a community within H.L.
- The policy writing acted as a focus, that helped discussions

iii. Share about the effect and impact on the organisational changes and development

Trustees have become more aware & involved.

Each aspect learning to appreciate the other, seeing how they all work together.

Realising that staff need to be in sympathy with ethos.  
Individuals from group have influenced other committees.

iv. Write about any specific implications in understanding and developing spirituality within the organisation for Holton Lee's future?

more awareness days in each aspect, help understand that spirituality surrounds us.

To find new people who understand ethos and will develop it further.

Some-one to head up spirituality & work within Faith House  
Look after 'Chapel' and make sure it is conducive to  
worship & meditation.

Encourage people to use 'sanctified space'



- v. Write about what and how we can share with the wider audiences ie what are the key qualities and requirements for spirituality praxis needed in order to keep spirituality operative and healthy at Holton Lee?

Want to share the inclusiveness of H.L.

- the integration of different aspects.
- people to discover new things.
- teach - demonstrate a new social model.
- interaction between our environment, care, spirituality.
- all people are of equal value.

Need to pass on understanding of ethos how.

Any new staff should be made aware of origin and vision.

H.L. Community Day where we can share together.

- learn to appreciate & encourage each other.
- draw people in - jointly owned.

To have prophetic teaching that will challenge Churches and individuals.

Encourage visitors - Open Days.

Keep communication open.

Respect the land

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Questions to consider especially as they relate to our Mission statement:

- i. What difference might there have been to Holton Lee if we hadn't had this research process?

This group has recognised that all aspects are inter-related & have tried to pass that awareness on. If not - groups might have developed & worked independantly causing friction, power struggles, communication problems and a feeling of disharmony.

With this research the spiritual aspect of H.L. might have been lost and with it the sense that we are on 'Holy Ground'.

- ii. How close are we to the original founding vision? Is it consistent with Faith's papers and present ethos and quality of life?

H.L. is still a 'place of refuge' - not only for the guests, but the staff and volunteers. People are being encouraged and empowered by the atmosphere, and loving care.

Although it is no longer the future of P.G. Community, the ethos of it has not been lost, but carried on by those who are part of the past, but also others who have absorbed and understood the ethos and want to promote it.

As each new area has been developed the vision grows. With Faith House Opening Soon, the 'personal growth' aspect can be more fully developed.

- iii. How have we and will we fill any gaps where there is an inconsistency so that we can be the centre of excellence?

We offer retreats, but still need better facilities and list of spiritual guides.

Update Ash Tree cottage.

- iv. How can we establish our practices to ensure that they are kept healthy and authentic? What do we still need to do?

Need to establish pattern for counselling -  
Where, who, supervision, confidentiality.

Make sure all who are involved know  
what is required.

Although respecting other faiths, need to establish  
our Christian roots and make sure they continue.

See appointment of suitable person to Faith House  
will help there.

v. How do we monitor and keep the practice healthy and keep a finger on the pulse?

Keep a Spirituality Group going to advise and monitor 'co-ordinator' of Faith House.

Perhaps become a 'pastoral group' that looks after the well being of the Hh. Community.

**Any other comments.**

April 2002

TONY HEATON

Faith, Optimism and CharityFOUNDING VISION - The "Then"

The founding vision must have been stored somewhere in my subconscious.

I remember when I conditionally accepted the role of Director that I needed to undertake much research to attempt to understand how the organisation functioned, the role of the employees and the ethos and mission.

On reflection I remember coming across the "founding vision" when I searched for other documents, lost in the passage of time.

We did not use the "founding vision" as a working manual, nor was I given it by the Trustees with a view of working towards it, nor was it part of a (non-existent) business plan.

The "founding vision paper" was one of a collection of writings produced by Faith Lees, who I never met but feel a strong sense of her presence. We, in many ways have followed the spirit of the vision by "accident" a synchronicity. Recently I saw some video footage from 10 years ago, the speaker said "... this has come out of a great vision, come out of the generosity, prayer and faith of Sir Thomas and Lady Faith Lees... how appropriate it is that your name is Faith...."

The development of Holton Lee was dependant on a very well presented £4 million bid to the lottery which failed, plans were changed and energy was low, Faith had died in September 1996 and looking at the structure of the organisation, its funding position and the organisational health check I had done with the existing staff, accepting the job and taking on the role of Director seemed complete folly, yet the notion wrapped up in the "founding vision" and four aspects was compelling to me:

- 1) AS AN ARTIST the Arts, particularly Disability arts and Environmental arts. As a practising artist both elements featured strongly within my own work
- 2) AS A DISABLED PERSON recognising the discrimination and oppression of disabled people imposed by the structures and systems of society
- 3) THE ENVIRONMENT – a strong feeling, developed over many years that what we, as a society, were doing to our environment was wrong, short-sighted and destructive, a "sixties child" the damage done by capitalism, consumerism, "built-in" obsolescence, the disposable culture inherited from the growing power of the USA never felt very comfortable for me as an individual but I couldn't imagine that I could change things, so like many, I accepted the structure of society and lived with my own "rules" within it.
- 4) PERSONAL GROWTH AND SPIRITUALITY – I was never religious but I felt a strong sense of the spirit though the arts and the environment, I undertook personal growth as a learning experience, developed through living, experiential rather than theoretical, a way to become a "better" person, to tread more lightly in the world.

The inclusion of religion as part of the “founding vision” was the most intangible part of the “big picture” when I first accepted the role as Director. I had spent time with Sir Tom Lees, his family, Carolyn Reinhart and Gerry O’Meara. I felt their honesty and generosity of spirit, which did much to quell my fear of religion, dogma and ritual. The notion of service to others, the genuine wish to include rather than to integrate was appealing and the practical aspects of the “founding vision” gave me confidence. I saw my job clearly to build the vision, though not by following rigorously Faith’s papers, as I said earlier, much of the development unfolded almost by accident, we would rediscover some of Faith’s papers and it would come as a surprise to realise that we had achieved many of the things that Faith talked about. We called it “spooky” but it was really about following the broad founding principles.

## THE “I/ME”

I remember reading that the artist is the antenna of society, developing a vision in an inequitable society is to make, rather than follow a path.

The “funding” system conspires against vision. It is staffed by gatekeepers who are terrified of vision – as long as your “project” fits into their pre-determined boxes you will have a chance to be thrown into the hat and drawn out as part of the lottery that is the funding “luck of the draw”.

The charity model has shifted from the benign benefactors to the mean bureaucrats, who instead of using the notion of equal opportunities as a flexible structure to operate within, use it as a mathematical equation to tick and score. Everything they need is on the form, they don’t want to visit the ‘project’, or meet the individuals who had and will benefit, they don’t need to respond to the sense of place, to feel it, to know that injecting much needed cash to address the inequitable structure of society is the right thing to do. They lack courage, its more than their job is worth – (keep the status quo, three chords, rocking all over the world).

Like almost all of the voluntary sector, we, Holton Lee are creative, cost effective, conscientious and try to meet a huge unmet need. We operate outside the medical model of “care giving” as imposed by the structure of social services and delivered by a local authority. We work towards the social model, to change the structures and systems that create barriers that discriminate and oppress particularly Disabled individuals.

This is also problematical because if you don’t play by the rules of others, if you challenge the system that makes the machine of social administration work, but fails the individual, then again you are penalised.

So to follow a vision, be an antenna, create a path rather than follow a path you are very much alone, the funders will not join you on your journey, neither will the authorities, add to that a prejudice that rises within many when you talk of spirituality or God and it is a miracle that we have succeeded so far.

What has emerged for me is the positive unconditional regard and support we have from those who have responded to the ethos of Holton Lee, our guests and visitors who experience the team work that has developed as a result of working within our aims and ethos, for people not profit, for marginalised and discriminated against people. It takes time to develop deep democracy, you need patience, creativity of thinking, a determination to listen and an acceptance that there are different ways to the same place.



We don't provide a product that our guests and visitors consume, they take part in our lives, join our community

And the feedback they give us is a great reward and confirmation that what we are doing is groundbreaking, important and different to existing provision. This is how we establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within our praxis.

The calm, peace and sense of refuge of Holton Lee is not easy to achieve, for the staff and volunteers it demands discipline, uncompromising standards and a high degree of commitment to service. It can be very difficult to find personnel who can capture the vision and work within and for it, we are a community, a loose collective, and it has been necessary to frame the organisation within a set of policies that are continuously reviewed, this takes time and energy, to respond and change, to meet the demands within the four aspects of the arts, disability, the environment and personal growth/spirituality, to sift and distil what is out there, happening within the world around us and how we can and should respond to it, within our aims, ethos and mission.

Simple practical issues like making all our buildings and services as accessible as possible, meeting the individual needs of guests by having open and honest dialogue, through feedback forms and discussing with individuals and organisations about what they need from us and what we need from them, simply allowing people to play an active part in their own destiny. Our job is not to control them within the constraints of our organisational structure but to enable them within a flexible structure built around our guiding principles.

The paradox is that by working in this way it becomes very difficult to define and categorise Holton Lee, people look and say, "oh! So you are a respite centre for Disabled people" and we have to say well no, the local authority may have defined us as that because they "purchase care" from us. Similarly people say "... so, you're a Retreat centre". Again no, we do act as a retreat for a whole range of people, going on holiday might be termed a "retreat" from the stresses and strains of everyday living, consequently we provide "holiday" accommodation but we are not a holiday and activity centre. Non-disabled people who might come on holiday may say we didn't realise you were 'for' Disabled people, we discover what they really mean is that we have roll-in showers and handrails in bathrooms, buildings are ramped or have level access, and they see Disabled people out and about the estate or Disabled people working within the organisation. We then have to explain that we work to create a fully inclusive environment so all can have as equal an opportunity as possible to enjoy what we work to provide.

Equal access means people can more readily achieve their potential. The idea means that people join in, if they wish, with all that takes place. The garden where we grow vegetables and herbs (on organic principles) are open for people to help in the work that eventually brings food to the table, Disabled people who thought, though onset of impairment that their gardening days were over, may go away planning to re-design their garden with raised beds and planters and a renewed energy to take part in life again, children are enlightened and sometimes shocked to realise that chips are first potatoes that grow in the soil, peas grow in pods and taste even more sweet straight from the plant, they see birds, animals and reptiles and the interaction of nature in microcosm.

People make art for the first time since leaving school, they see and discuss art because at Holton Lee Art is in the environment, its being created and exhibited, it informs our lives and brings joy, taps into our emotions, our spirituality, our growth into what we are, or are working to be.

These and many other examples illustrate what we do and how difficult it becomes to try to present Holton Lee in clear marketing terms.

People also say oh, your Christians, as if that describes us, the fact is that we were founded on Christian principles, but Christians, Buddhists, Atheist's and Agnostics all manage to work together within our self-regulated system. Consequently we hope all will feel welcome within our ethos based as it is on Christian principles.

THE TOMORROW will be the defining and refining of the four aspects. Arts, Disability, Environment, Personal Growth and Spirituality.

Continuing the journey we are already embarked upon.

The arts will continue to foster the need for self expression, art touches all aspects of life, art will be of the environment, it may enhance personal growth and understanding, it can tap into the spirit.

The environment will remain a major issue, particularly in keeping a balance in our lives, the simple act of exploring and enjoying the outdoors and the wonder of the natural world with the possibility of tapping into the spiritual parts of the self – giving more access to Disabled people to explore and respond to the freedom of the outdoors, by providing all terrain vehicles or by horse and carriage – creating pathways and viewing platforms, accessible interpretation and education in an inclusive rather than formal way.

Creating the potential for personal growth by giving as wide a set of possibilities, rather than working within an institutionally bound set of unchanging rules.

Giving space, both inside buildings and outside, for prayer, reflection or meditation, offering help to pray, reflect or meditate.

These four fundamental aspects of the arts, disability, the environment, personal growth and spirituality will remain – the personnel will change, (they already have done) and we will remain optimistic that they will be replaced by others who have been touched by the vision or seen the way the organisation works and wish to help.

Our building programme will develop, again within the four aspects. The architecture will be exemplary, reflecting the outside natural world within its structures.

It will lift the spirit to see and to live and work within, buildings will be fully accessible harnessing new technology to give equal access. There will be no segregated services.

Art will be created alongside the development of the architecture to work with the structures, art and architecture in harmony, accessible, fit for purpose and to environmental principles, maximising natural resources and minimising waste. Disabled people will still face discrimination, disadvantage and oppression, even with legislation and the Disability rights commission and we will continue to challenge that injustice.

People will come for renewal and not worry that we still cannot quite define ourselves and our service adequately.

Carolyn's paper 1680 words

JEANNE HINTON

The 'Then' –

For me the vision of what is coming into being at Holton Lee takes me back to a walk Faith Lees and I took late one afternoon in the early seventies. I forget the actual year and even the season but the feel and the sense of that walk lingers. Faith wanted to show me Holton Lee – East Holton then and farmland. I remember our walking up from the foreshore and coming across a small natural amphitheatre marked out by enclosing trees. We stood in that place and knew it all to be a gift, something special, given. 'This place is made for good things to happen.' We both felt it. A few years after that the Post Green summer camps were transferred to East Holton; the large fields opposite The Barn still fondly known as the camp field. Good things did happen in those ... years of camps at East Holton. From these beginnings other things grew – Holton Lee as it now is and is becoming.

Now as part of this research I have been reading again Faith's papers on 5 and 10 years on at Holton Lee. I am surprised again at how insightful her thoughts are, how close to what is being put into place, and also surprised at how we are far from achieving her goals within the time frame she gives. Faith wrote them in 1996 and now eight or so years on we are barely into achieving her five year goals. It takes a long time to establish a new work or venture; insuperable difficulties are always happening. What has been sustained and developed is the founding ethos – a place of welcome, of integration, of learning; an extension of the vision that brought the Post Green Community into being. This has made me think again of the power and strength of a truly authentic ethos that is passed on to the others who take it up. It has in its inception to be real, felt, more than words. It continues to be 'felt'. A reading of The Barn's guest book is a witness to this.

Here one answer to the question 'How can Holton Lee best establish and embed an informed, authentic, relevant and embodied spirituality within its praxis,' is that it has to be there to start with, within the very foundations. Establishing and embedding follows from that.

## The Group Research Process

### A personal change

Change is not the word I would use as much as affirmation. My own spirituality – that part of me that lies deepest within and that influences decisions and the course of my life – has changed over the years and is changing. I hope that means that I have been growing as a person – certainly stretched. I don't see things in quite the same way as I did. I no longer find the same sustenance and energy from some forms of institutional religion that before I found helpful. This can be a lonely place. In the spirituality group at Holton Lee I have found others who are also exploring faith in new dimensions, knowing themselves to be growing and changing. Each of us experiences this differently, but we are open to each other's expressions of faith and to learn from one another. This is also what we seek to develop at Holton Lee; a place where others can explore faith for themselves, not have it imposed upon them. Those of us in the spirituality group are all Christian explorers; others who come may be of other faiths or none. We can share honestly but openly with one another.

Part of my work now is with a programme called 'NEW Way'. That is a 'new way of being church'. Holton Lee is one of the places where I personally can explore this dimension of what it means to 'be church' today. There are many connections here.

One area in particular where I feel myself being stretched and changing as a result of the group, is in relation to creation, to the land and the wildlife. The heath at Holton Lee is a constant delight and I love to walk on it. There is also something that happens when others share their delight and their reflections on what they see and hear; Julie, Tony and particularly Alan in the group, draw me into this experience in a new way. Seeing God's creation through each others' eyes and experience. Perhaps it is given that we be ears and eyes to each other? I am learning something deep here.

### Group change

From what I have written above it would seem that we have been a somewhat cosy, amicable group just getting on with things. It actually hasn't been like that. There have been times when irritation, annoyance and despair has surfaced – with one another and with the process. Some have felt overwhelmed by too much paper or by too many words or sheer exhaustion of trying to capture a subject far too elusive even for us. Among us however we have had skills to work through this - gained as counsellors or in social work –

and all of us knew the task was too important for us to compromise it as a result of by personal hang ups. I think now we have come to a new place in our relating and that has come about partly through an emerging confidence in what we are about and in our having taken some action beyond the group. The new confidence is expressed for me in our now starting our meetings with a moment of quiet and reflection – we are beginning to model what we want to pass on, and our actively sharing with trustees and others has changed the energy of the group. We are taking words into action; discovering the effectiveness of the Action/Reflection Cycle.

## THE ‘NOW’

### Organisational change

What I sensed when Alan and I first opened up with other trustees this whole subject of spirituality - not as a report but as a short reflective exercise in which we were all involved - was the delighted response of the other trustees at being enabled to see things from a different perspective. It was encouraging and energising for all of us. That is certainly a contribution of the ‘spirituality leg’ to the organisation; enabling a different perspective, offering energy, a sense of purpose. When this was followed by a ‘spirituality workshop’ for staff, volunteers and trustees, the response was similar. I think we were a bit surprised; anxious that spirituality was too nebulous a concept to draw or interest others in the organisation. We were wrong. In particular what opened up was a place for people to meet and share as persons – who they are, what they think, how they see Holton Lee. A step towards recognising ‘the community’ that is growing at Holton Lee was taken; the request that this is taken further.

Spirituality is only one of the legs and contributes to building an ethos that is also being developed by other legs in the organisation – the arts, disability, the environment. There is much here that is complementary. It is not always possible to say which leg is contributing what and that is good. There has been an important change in management structure in the past year to enable these four legs to interact more with one another. That is the setting up to the Development Action Group and the Management Action Group. This is enabling more participation at the base from all sections of the organisation. I see the spirituality group as having a particular remit to keep raising the importance of such integration and of good communications. Overall the ethos we build and continue to build or not – a taking on of the founding vision – needs to be both sustained and developed. The group in its own reflection and in enabling such times of reflection for others acts as a kind of guardian here. There have been and there will be times when particular decisions have seemed

to be at variance with this ethos and there will again be such times. Being able to question and to struggle with the answers – to deal with conflict - is much a part of an authentic spirituality. Here inevitably respect for and good communications with trustees and management groups is essential.

An organisation such as Holton Lee inevitably calls on a whole range of gifts and abilities. Managing, caring, artistic, horticultural, welcoming and many others; differing gifts but all of equal importance. It is part of the ethos of Holton Lee with its community background that all the gifts and skills are equally valued. This is to say that each person is equally valued and affirmed in who they are and what they do. Affirmation, integration, community building, struggling together, resolving conflict, that is all about what is deepest within – an individual or an organisation..

## THE ‘TOMORROW’

Thinking of the ‘tomorrow’ with my ‘spirituality’ hat on I believe we should be encouraged that people have already shown they are interested in this matter, be prepared to take some risks and be sure to continue to offer an open place of exploration to others. This means too that we need to be open to change and to be challenged. This is important. It might be wise for the spirituality group to have an outside consultant or spiritual director to this end.

As far as the research process itself is concerned it is certain that without it we would not have gone about this task of integrating spirituality into the organisation in such a thorough or thought out way. It has helped to lay a foundation for the future and at a timely point too. Now with the opening of Faith House and the resources that it will offer for workshops, events, liturgies and the dedicated space for prayer and meditation, we are able to build on the work that the group has been doing these past --- years.

Jeanne Hinton



# ALL INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEW KEY POINTS IN MORE DEPTH

## KEY POINTS FROM TONY

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### 1. Personal and key points

- Basic principles
- Call/vocation
- Spooky – non explicable happenings and intangible things
- Extraordinary commitment exists
- Strong ethos – incredibly strong
- Keeping an eye on the vision – not only a business thing
- No assessment of the value of the land
- Didn't come to start a faith journey or spiritual journey but felt that more dramatically than anything else
- Intrigued people leave spiritual door open and you can just walk through
- Equality, trusting, responsibility, empowering
- Structure
- Spirituality woven throughout into the whole organisation
- Monitor spirituality

### 2. Group and what happened in process – his perceptions

- Disparate group with dynamics – intimidating yet
- Got close together as a group , had quite intense discussions conducted with incredibly good nature
- Had real fear of being exploited re religion
- Felt he may have to be mediator, as Director, since lots of potential for conflict about spirituality in the group
- Yet he didn't want a watered down statement yet we now have a statement and policy
- We didn't "present" it and that is creative, since they wouldn't have wanted it then
- We have each got strong identities
- Time important – to think about things and not rush on, we wouldn't have completed it. He learned that you can't do this in a hurry in our quick fix world, they don't last long, symptom of the modern world, so argument for more thoughtful and long term planning and expectation
- Important since extremely tenuous – arc between religion at one end and x at the other end so important to get what we mean in print.
- Alan, in group process, became more in tune as Trustee, learned more and this is critical since people have shaped the organisation through this process
- He is therefore more informed and is vitally important point
- A structural thing – important part of the process of not having trustees who haven't a clue about the organisation which beavers away everyday but act like 2 ships passing in the night; but we have put a lot of time , trying to make it better
- Subversive way in presenting spiritual message "by being it" in all aspect groups

### 3. Organisation – structure and re-structuring and how it functions –what has happened

- Sam Field facilitation led to 4 Aspect Groups and Development and Management Groups – an incredible shift like chaos theory, hell of a lot of work into making terms and conditions of reference and that groups were equitable
- More strong now as organisation and so won't mess up if key people leave as long as people keep structures alive and commitment to work within them. Drawn together as a team
- Tremendously exciting for organisation – Holton Lee is radical as an organisation, and is set up very different to way most organisations are and so stronger than ever before
- Healthy since non-hierarchical and that culture has definitely permeated throughout the organisation of “us”
- Important to put a sound and helpful foundation for the organisation and best way to capture people's hearts is to involve them totally in solving their own problems
- We are all here and responsible for our own situation
- But also felt I was joining an organisation like that as well, with its sense of co-operation from historic point of view, an attitude which needed a clear direction, it was incredibly vulnerable to anyone and easily manipulated by a strong dominant personality, need to be treated carefully.
- Takes me back to idea of calling since didn't come to organisation with my eyes closed but did a lot of research and felt very in tune with the organisation
- Takes time to build up confidence in people and give time so they can think about things, and worked it through in their own way in order to have ownership, otherwise not helpful
- Also may take people longer to do something but sense of achievement when done is empowering. (this stacks up with what Derek said)
- Best way to make decisions is process driven, the way artists work too, many have strong idea of that they want
- If we had predetermined what spirituality policy would be, written it down and given it or said you write yours but we already know what we are wanting then deceitful way, pretending to go through full process, is offensive and you can't play around, you either are dictatorial or co-operative
- It is a balance
- It is good to have lots on board who are very committed to organisation as well
- But difficult if people are committed to things that can't happen eg counselling yet is not realistic or feasible
- Need to put a tremendous amount of trust in people as well, I can be controlling and prescriptive or keen to get people very enthused and excited about their work so they actually want to stay around and do it
- If they aren't enjoying it sack them, if they don't fit etc – if they aren't honest.

### 4. THE TOMORROW

- Notion of the 4 aspects working in harmony together makes this a very strong organisation – challenge is to balance and not compete and be healthy as each other – challenge because of funding

- Less worried about finances with much more positive attitude working toward this organisation being a success, then you have to make an act of faith
- People are more clear about their role , clearer strategic development plans
- Lots of things put in place so less likely place will fold
- Spirituality is being woven throughout –all that really woven into people who work here with personal and organisational spirituality
- Understanding the ethos and sign up to what we do with clear aims and principles – you either accept or not get involved, so less likely to take on woolly minded people who don't know what we are on about
- So very quickly shows up people who are conning us since we know what we are about.

## 5. **FRUITS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS – what if we hadn't done it?**

- We would be much weaker since:
  - i. Alan would not be as good a trustee
  - ii. Julie would not be as good a staff member
  - iii. Kicking on 2 cylinders instead of 4 in the vision
- So we are more authentic and effective – genuinely sensitive to 4 aspects
- Structure is better – groups drawing so much closer as to how organisation works – people feel they belong, more clear about how organisation works
- Give people responsibility and as long as we get results we want it doesn't matter how it gets done.
- Trusting people
- But if they can't handle responsibility they go
- Notion of spinning plates – supporting people in their jobs is a 2 way street – eg they ask for a meeting instead of me asking
- Work through spirituality group to monitor and in Development group and generally making sure everybody is feeling much more in touch
- Drawing out more equality – give each an opportunity to grow here
- Spirituality group at forefront of other groups – looking at some of the ways we've done things and so been a path finder for the other aspects
- Also about the buildings and land and opening up, so cared for and healthy
- Still barriers to overcome re being a “Christian place” and not a ghetto or stigma about that or disability
- Where do we start from or how far do we go back to , re Christianity? and what do we base this on? What set of principles do we have to call it “Christian” spirituality? In action – not a law or dogma.
- Part of mentoring and keeping finger on the pulse is to look back at what we came from, a strong spirituality going on to make that happen

### 1. Personal and key points

- I don't feel my relationship to Holton Lee is identified in terms of Trusteeship and I feel more connected to it as a person.
- I learned that it has been an enormously affirming experience with the group with a group of people who have all experienced something similar in their walks of faith, and articulating that
- Even though we are all very different with different backgrounds and experience
- A deep on-going experience
- We are cutting ground that other people tread and is reflective of other groups around the country and world so we are on track in terms of the future which is exciting. I work with New Ways of Being Church and Base Communities, globally and Holton Lee's spirituality group has become one place for me to experience a new way of being church locally
- We are stretching boundaries by asking big questions all the time, like what about other faiths and should we actually name the fact that we are Christians? Or who do we welcome?
- Also learned a lot from Alan's joy and delight of environment and people here and so has drawn me into a deeper awareness

### 2. Group and what happened in process - perceptions

- We have done a lot of spade work
- So now hopefully we can begin to work though some of the things we have thrown up in a deeper way
- We have learned about listening to each other, not always easy
- We have struggled for lots of reasons, having to read so much or work with definitions and other reasons but good because otherwise we are just being polite and not really able to come to grips with anything
- Latterly more able to give space and listen which is essential for Holton Lee since it is a good bit of what spirituality is about.
- So there has been that process in the group
- We didn't give up since we all somehow knew that what we were doing is too important and essential to Holton Lee , so we struggled through to something more positive. We wouldn't have been so frustrated if it wasn't something so important. For developing the founding vision.
- We have begun to feel more free among ourselves too to so that we can start meetings with something expressive and symbolic like a reading, music, a prayer, or silence – what ever the person brings. That is a huge step forward and has taken a long time
- Since we have done a lot of the spade work we now want to get involved in action, like in the Pastoral Cycle
- We have done small bits with the Trustees and on 27 Oct and discovered a new dimension of working together, taking us a step further.
- Alan and I impeccably worked up several 10 min slots for Trustees meetings and discovered affirmation in it.

### **3. Organisation – structure and re-structuring and how it functions –what has happened**

- Holton Lee has grown out of the community experience and has been working ever since the beginning
- But spirituality group what has happened has been enormously important for us as a group and the organisation too and we are just beginning to open the whole area of spirituality with others which was such an affirming experience and gave us more for the future
- You are writing that day 27<sup>th</sup> Oct up
- Another interesting area is to recognise that our brief is not only limited to opening people up in terms of spirituality but has to do with the undergirding ethos and how people experience themselves in the organisation
- How conflict is dealt with
- Sometimes having to say what is happening is not representative of how we want the organisation to be in terms of our belief
- So spirituality group has a very gently watching brief, yet to be tested, but not held only within the group
- It is everybody's responsibility but group keeps the awareness to things which might need to be raised.
- If spirituality is about for example, respect for each other, and if organisation is not acting respectfully then those things are at odds with each other; must be link and integrity within the organisation

#### **Present day practice**

- I know that people have written in the guest book the welcome they experience in the Barn and they name the love they experience so obviously it is lived out on a daily basis
- Also in terms of care for the environment
- And in Tony – who has a very acute sense of justice for all people
- It is about articulating and naming it which is most important thing, what is going on, or what people experience here, what they are looking for and searching for and actually give a name to it.

### **4. THE TOMORROW**

- **Gaps**
  - Slight concern about whole area of communication for the decision making process
  - Bigger decisions seem not to be communicated
  - Are there any models around to learn from?
  - There are so many groups and legs and different levels of management
  - And also a gap about how to integrate non disabled people
  - And with integration with the 4 aspects too
- **Christianity and our roots**
  - It is like anything to do with interfaith, not watering down your faith but about exchange, experience of sharing faith,
  - Holton Lee would be very weak indeed if we cannot find or give an expression to our Christian faith,
  - Particularly in relationship to Faith House

- Difficult for us here in Dorset as opposed to Birmingham; not so many opportunities.
- Non-expression not where we are at, nor is proselytizing
- May have to make a deliberate task to put on a workshop on Christian and eg Buddhist spirituality – we need that enrichment as well as having our freedom.
- **Management structure**
  - Not easy to be trustee re money and buildings etc
  - But if trustee has responsibility for ethos of the place then I can connect with it and makes a very special bond between trustees and spirituality group
  - Both have a particular remit in relation to that – a revelation to me when I thought about it.
  - The other was recognising the qualities needed – need such a range of qualities in office, barn and on the land and so somehow recognising and affirming each person's gifts, so they know they are important to Holton Lee
- **Faith's book – and introduction**
  - Ethos and myths and sustaining ethos – quite incredible with Lees family and then Faith bringing that out and carried it somewhere very particular
  - Incredible thing when an ethos can be that strong that someone coming to the Barn this week can pick it up, even with no previous contact
  - This really needs chasing up a bit
  - Similar to Iona community
  - Ethos and positive is stronger than any negative and has something to do with love and power
  - You can have a vision and be a visionary and think ahead but often it will take a lot lot longer than you ever anticipated
  - It takes a long time to work through a very solid and enabling vision

## 5. FRUITS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS – what if we hadn't done it?

- If you hadn't engaged in this, irritating though it has been at times do deal with paper etc it certainly means that whatever is going to happen wouldn't have been so thought through
- Wouldn't have been such a good base in terms of building for the future – no doubt about that
- How do we monitor and keep practice healthy? And keep finger on pulse?
- We may need an outside consultant
- We have been naming all along in the interviews principles we can share with others. So make a list of them as summary from the interviews, which summarise our experience showing impact on organisation and principles emerging
- Audiences – look at Sam's list and bring to the group to see if anything missing – more organic that way
- Each group has a remit to be aware of each others' intentions so we can have shared intent.
- We are not trying to inscribe something rigidly in stone



### 1. Personal and Key points

- I note that we each have our own way of thinking and that we spark each other off. We can think along parallel lines and yet work differently and supplement each other which is useful. Some want to cross the t's and dot the i's and that brings others down to earth
- The process has been important since it is in the actual living which is important and what you are doing now and not what you are aiming for at the end which may or may not come about

### Spirituality itself and principles-

- You think you know where people are coming from and that you are starting more or less on the same level, that we are all in this together and understand the same depths and then realise that we are not all understanding the same way.
- We all have our own backgrounds and understanding about what we mean by spirituality. We have our own experience and a lot of people aren't in the same place and not going along the same path, even within our church
- You then realise that you are different and think that others may like and want what you have experienced but it doesn't work that way. So one has to take personalities into account and recognise that some will go one direction with spirituality and others in another. One is not right or wrong; just a different way of seeing things.
- So in our enthusiasm we should not push it on people but realise it is not for them and take a step back.
- So when we are talking about spirituality and how things go forward we need a wide range because some will appeal to some and other things will appeal to others and not what we think is appealing.
- Also to recognise that if one has thought in-depth about something about the spiritual life to recognise also that for some teaching has been almost non-existent including those in the Anglican church.
- They may think it is way beyond and so I have to keep it at a very basic level, then their understanding grows but if I go off into my own realms they can't follow me and so in groups you just have to respect where people are at and learn from them, even if in a very different place than you, and hopefully they learn from you.
- It is in groups working that you learn from each other.

### Personal learning in our group –

- spirituality creeps up on you rather than a flash.
- I appreciated where you were at, which is different than me and I am learning from what you are doing.
- You ask questions that I wouldn't even know as questions to ask and that is challenging so that is making me think harder about things I wouldn't even have thought about.
- Julie comes from a different place too, am getting to know her better and she appears to be on the same wave-length and then sometimes I think we are on the opposite wave-length.
- Sometimes I also think that we are on opposite wave-lengths and suddenly we are not.
- Sometimes I realise I am on the same wave-length with someone and can't say why.
- Tony and Alan bring in a bit more of the practical and exactly how to work out theory. Theory is lovely but how do we put it into **practice**?
- What, when, who, what timing etc to run a day like 27<sup>th</sup> Oct (Awareness Raising Day)

- We are therefore learning from each other that you can't just let things happen, they won't just happen and that you need to make them happen
- In talking about theory it seemed we were going round and round in circles
- But more focused because of Faith House so we have to think what to do with it and therefore focus our minds on how and what and who is going to **"do"** it. It put into practice and that is exciting.
- In the group we started at the bottom and worked our way up rather than start at the top
- If we had had Faith House there and had to decide what workshops we should **do** and how and start straight away rather than working from bottom up and having to ask **what are we about?** Because it is quite a big subject, spirituality is quite a vague sort of thing and these days people think it is New Age if you say **spirituality** – unfortunately hooks onto that
- So we have to be careful about **terminology** we use and that even varies with Christian, Ignatian, or Franciscan or from Iona.
- You don't shake off early evangelical absolutes very easily and there will always be more challenge along these lines – eg interfaith or salvation outside of Christianity
- But you have to talk about and think about it and that is challenging so I have to put to one side my background in order to consider some of these questions.
- I think this group has **widened my horizons** looking into what spirituality is as far as Christian spirituality is
- I knew what it was for me – but spirituality just as a word?

#### **For example on 27<sup>th</sup> October**

- awareness-raising day trying to get people to see and get in touch with what is inside one, whether in appreciation for the beauty of the sounds of the birds and that can be the start of it- **opening one's self out to things, having to put it in simple terms**
- that made me realise how you have to start with people
- You can't start where we are at but help them to feel perhaps I do have some sort of spiritual element to me.
- That has been part of **my learning** that everybody has a spiritual element that they don't even recognise and how to **tap into that**
- What we have heard from disabled people staying is that their lives have been changed by being here
- Just aware of **the different dimension to life which is the start of an on-going process**
- I learned previously with Ignatian spirituality that you have to start with where people are rather than tell them what you know and then go from there
- We have this opportunity in the care of the land and the arts to start where people are and help them to see hopefully a bit more of a dimension to life.
- People find a different way of living being able to get out, taking up photography, bird watching, art, pottery and all that opens one's eyes a bit.
- Also **volunteers** must recognise that there is something here that they want to be part of and see developing which is quite special
- God is in the place in different ways
- I see God at work in the **care people put into the land** which is ours to care for, given by God to look after, now done with the land management, pond dug out and heather growing
- **Loving care in the Barn** and how people are so appreciative – wherever **care and love is given** God is at work there.
- Helps people to expand, grow and open up
- **Massage** and touch is important especially when old or ill

- **Arts** side opens my eyes to see things in a different way seeing woods and expression of being able to put things on paper – what you see or imagine – is another area of growth
- Start looking at trees differently and everything differently
- And produce something which you didn't think you could (relates to Stella interview and Mike)
- Gives wonderful sense of satisfaction

## 2. Group and what happened in process – perceptions

## 3. Organisation – structure and re-structuring and how it functions – what has happened

## 4. The Tomorrow

## 5. Fruits of the research process

- we have built a foundation and a base from which to work
- when Faith House comes into being it will be our job to **fill the gap** and make sure that thing like workshops happen or put them on until we hire someone, now we know where we are coming from and can do the practical things.
- Until we start to **do** something we won't know exactly the sort of person we want.
- Could include oversight of pastoral care or chaplain type person who is available to talk with guests and staff, like a presence.
- They will need a backup advisory group to make sure they are on track and this group can offer than since we have gelled – until person is on same wave-length
- This is necessary because when those in group at present are no longer available then **who is going to hold it** – so need to fill gap within the next year and start thinking what type of person who has a sense of heart here, is gentle, has a real feel for the place, and can also bring own understanding and gifts, a liaison person to help listen to personality clashes and when things flare up, someone present with pastoral gifts, here all of the time, someone like a **keeper of the ethos** of the place, perhaps one-two people to keep ethos going so even though staff, trustees or director changes, somewhere the vision is being held.
- This is a suggestion for structure of the organisation
- We also need to know how long our group will keep going and how and what is our function if we do keep going.
- Spirituality and pastoral go together
- People don't just arrive with the ethos they have to pick it up and if key people left at the moment then ethos would disappear –(Liz said about Tom being that) and then Holton Lee would just be a centre that is run without the ethos, since there is such a long background for the ethos, since community and now us. It took us some time to pick it up years ago
- People are experiencing something but I am wanting to take it on to the **next stage** if you like
- We need to get our act together to agree just what sort of person we are looking for, for the future and not dependent on personalities
- We can do something slightly different here – with advantage of the environment, and arts and spirituality and disabled people can be involved in it all recognising that everybody is important and we are all together and inclusive and the place is accessible.

### 1. Personal and key points

- he said he shares as layman without academic **language**
- **Audience** need a book that people are able to pick up and read and enjoy at the same time for others who are thinking of starting a similar organisation therefore a reference book for stakeholders
- also as a link with Faith's book and understand Faith's reference point in starting Holton Lee in considering experience of others.
- not a case of do this and this will result
- the changes in the group are very much influenced by the direct changes which we experience within ourselves and in myself
- individuals within group but also real sense of **relationship**, an active dynamic situation and evolvement
- has come face to face with own mortality during time in group, heart surgery so time for contemplation – a real crunch point and opened him up to thinking about God in many different ways and
- coincided with spending more time at Holton Lee, really enjoying it and being immersed and exposed to Holton Lee and seeing spirituality of the land, the barn, way staff related to guests, in terms of land management structures, and so began to see God in so many different things, had not seen Him in before, very exciting and freed me up
- From being an Evangelical Christian taught to defend the **truth** knowing God with my head, and now I **know in my heart** and so feel that I am on **this journey** and Holton Lee is part of this journey for me
- Withdrew from church leadership since it wasn't relevant to the experience I was going through and was too confining and God not only there in church
- Going into new horizon, **walking the land** being involved with fauna and people who work here and disabled people and in spirituality in people. Get so excited
- Ask God to show me what he is doing today so I can be part of it, keep my eyes open so I don't miss opportunities
- Finding God under every stone and in every person
- God is far greater than I ever knew
- And I know it in my heart and Holton Lee has been a part of that
- **Journey** is vital subject to me and the importance of raising and maintaining my own awareness of spirituality
- I am a **doing person** worked in career and management setting targets and tendency in me to drive – a pride to my spirituality and church life
- Now appreciating in spirituality I **don't need to have a target** can take space, for meditation and actually really deep down enjoy God instead,
- Don't have to criticise myself as I used to - due to **acceptance by other people** including the group as we do accept each other as we are, willing to be honest with each other and honouring each other and reverence what they say
- The way we share I feel we are **offering a part of our selves** and that is a privilege to receive in way we are receiving a part of somebody, especially if they are being honest and open about what they are saying
- In the group, talking and listening has opened my eyes and am now less of a judgemental person
- Wouldn't otherwise be going on the **pilgrimage** in same way, same sense, if wasn't for stimulus of being here and part of that is being part of the group

- We won't ever arrive at conclusions with our authentic experiences and once we do it will be the death of the spirituality group
- Very important and must be prepared to re-visit decisions and be willing to admit we were wrong
- Am a feeling person rather than an intellectual one, so concerned that I had to understand academically , intellectually about spirituality . Trying to translate feelings is very difficult for me and now have come to accept that I don't have to understand all the **terminology** to be able to have an intellectually valid comment
- Both are necessary and often feelings that we have are **communicated verbally**, so therefore you limit what you can communicate, however if you can verbalise, get it in writing, in some way that is communicable then you can extend your **audience**.
- There is more potential for people who are reading our various contributions to say I can identify with that.

## 2. Group and what happened in process – perceptions

- if any of us had come into the group with fixed ideas then it would have very negative impact on group, with just one opinion and one focal point, so one just wouldn't want to change and there wouldn't be the **involvement** (relates to what TH said about policy)
- In that case the **conflict** can be resolved but only be resolved by sort of skirting around it, trying to encapsulate it in some ways so it doesn't have any influence any longer
- But we need to be free in the group as individuals to explore.
- I think that we have been free
- **Christian spirituality** though had got to the point which was a no-go area and I was getting anxious about that, knowing the longer we put it off the more potential for us to be side-lining it.
- So reassured by August discussion – so keen to be in good relationship and harmonious with “nice meetings” we haven't had any confrontational ones – so wonder if we are actually avoiding? Consciously or un-consciously? After the honeymoon period in the group?
- We have such diversity in where we come from and that is eased considerably by us being willing to be open and that is what **I have been learning in the group**
- We didn't start off the group , saying right we are starting off with statements and producing a spirituality policy and statement
- But we have come to the conclusion and it became clear and we decided earlier on that we need to write a vision statement and **then** it became clear that we actually did need to get into print something for others to be able to read, succinct and not-defining , which resulted in the **spirituality statement**
- That **was really more difficult than we might have anticipated**
- Then it became clear that in fact it wasn't enough and that surprised me since I thought it would be enough
- Had to actually accept that it was **necessary to write a policy** which reflected the spirituality statement which reflected the activities and attitudes of Holton Lee
- There was a **gap there** and it surprised me
- **Re Business and spirituality** or the business of spirituality , the times we met without a business agenda have been very valuable because we have the space to let our thoughts roam and we need more of that space within our other meetings
- What emerged for me is that our common understanding has actually been greater than I might have expected at the beginning.

- What has emerged is that the **group is a space** which surprisingly feels “safe” for people to feel free to say pretty well what they want to without having a shocked response even in body language and that is important
- It wasn’t necessarily in the beginning but has become a place of trust (theory and how to make this happen in groups?)
- It has become **collective**, as a group, we don’t try to snatch or take **power** but have strong desire and have taken **responsibility for spirituality** at Holton Lee and its **development**
- We are not **imposing** and not becoming contented in the group within itself, that would deny the **very ethos of spirituality at Holton Lee**
- I wince at term “spirituality group” – could have so many wrong connotations and therefore we as we actually humbly live it among ourselves it becomes clear then how to live it out in office, land management, trustees and other people . It has to do with **Management attitudes**, walk the talk.
- Live it – **living it out**, spirituality is something caught not taught
- With spirituality statement and policy there has to be that **integrity**, between way we live it out and the way it is down on paper (like Jeanne integrity)
- Otherwise **only theory and becomes hypocrisy**
- Other thing in group is that very profound thoughts on spirituality and insights are often the simplest and is very valuable – like you said, “finding God under every stone.” – **earthed it**, instead of it being “out there” – very important
- **Effects of group change** his personal opinion as part of the group is that it has to be **connecting** with people at different levels, with head, heart and so on and
- Being part of trustees we had opportunity to speak and therefore made heart connection there and able to **communicate at heart level** by connecting with the person
- Since spirituality group wanted to raise awareness with trustees I had a way in to share
- And then I got a **heart response rather than head response**
- Thrilled and some drawn in to spend more time at Holton Lee as well
- Don’t think spirituality of HL will be experienced by anyone until they **actually spend time here** – including trustees. It just doesn’t work
- Don’t think I can justify the privilege of being a trustee if I don’t. Holton Lee is so precious and such a privilege
- Other thing that came out in group is that you **can’t separate spirituality from love and where there is love there is spirituality**
- And the group was feeling it and part of letting it out is being in **loving relationships**

### 3. **Organisation – structure and re-structuring and how it functions – what has happened.**

- We need more trustees who are involved
- May need an outside spiritual director coming in sometimes as outside observer; if not careful we could become incestuous.
- God is so powerful and the spiritual energy and “what I have to say about organisational change is exciting” (and Jeanne said, ‘so my excitement on doing this on trusteeship is that if a trustee has responsibility for the ethos...’) hearing our discussion as a group and wanting the organisation to recognise spirituality **in all aspects of Holton Lee and the interrelationship and integration of the 4 aspects**
- It was happening elsewhere but I think in the group we became convinced about it with a conviction that we have
- Also of the need **for the vision to be articulated** and to be held within a responsible small group



- **That has become recognised** particularly after **27<sup>th</sup> Oct** (Awareness Raising Day), within the organisation as a whole
- (Jeanne said not)
- I know by responses I picked up from people on the day , a confidence and trust in the people that were dealing with it, not said in so many words but was a feeling. People had come with anxiety, suspicion. (tacit awareness)
- It was an experience they enjoyed, grateful there was such an event, and wouldn't have been if we hadn't organised it
- Tony feared there might be conflict
- We can deal with conflict as long as we in the **group have got the scope**, which I think we have, to guide people away from that confrontation.
- I had no fear that we as individuals wouldn't in fact be representing what the group felt as a whole. It came from shared experience. And had a naturalness to it

### **Organisational changes**

- Embryonic recognition on 27<sup>th</sup> Oct that Holton Lee is **a community**
- If spread and taken on board by everybody then implications for individuals, we are together in all of this ; there is a togetherness and not fragmentation.
- Although secular organisation spirituality is essential to it
- We don't have to be ashamed of spiritual element
- But balance of spirituality at Holton Lee means not imposing, that is wrong and unnatural
- But at same time not hiding it because we don't want to put people off and that is unnatural
- Just being real and natural about it and being willing to speak about it when opportunity occurs.
- So with equal opportunities policy when interviewing people recognise the importance of the spiritual element at Holton Lee, not doctrinal or testing but recognise it is seen as important in the people we take on, if we are a community then they need to be able to be a part of the ethos of that community and that ideally means recognising spirituality
- We are making a judgement otherwise if we **don't mention** spirituality because we don't think they are a "spiritual person" – eg revelation when 30 people showed up

### **Guests and disability**

- Not pity type handshakes but what has happened for me is recognition that there ain't any difference, get embarrassed when people say how good of you to go to The Barn and spend time with the guests because I receive and if they only knew how much I got from them
- Sharing experiences and joy of that – I would like to think of spirituality as that. Otherwise we often need people to build up our own sense of self-worth and be Sir Galahads
- Important for the **organisation that we** actively consider the idea of people and groups coming to be involved in the Barn, ie with Julie – a gradual evolvement starting with one or two

### **4. The tomorrow**

- Implications for the future are that there is a need for persistent gentle nurturing
- Some things that are most precious are the most fragile
- For the whole organisation – we cannot take anything for granted, so worked at, lived out nurture on-going, "the unforced rhythms of grace"
- Gentle, gently and once we force it you get confrontation

- Find out where God is working and go with it and from nurturing keep on watering
- It is a partnership and a lot less energy and lot less apprehension
- Do you ever see people going out to speak about Holton Lee and not just communicate with other audiences through a book
- Not just for fund raising purposes
- Disability issue and training and teaching of that is essential and shouldn't be optional for anyone.
- All aspect groups should have an activity as we did with Spirituality Group – make us feel more of a whole

#### Audiences –

- identify them? Look at Sam's list of stakeholders we made
- Do we need to establish that there is a need out there already
- Also perhaps get people to recognise that there is a need and create a need?
- Title of the book can reflect this – eg spirituality without compartments

#### 5. Fruits of the research process

- If we hadn't had it as we developed the whole thing we would have become more **business like**, more emphasis on business side, promotional side, more emphasis on money side and on function and would be more clinical in a sense.
- I think some people's **personal outlook** has changed and wouldn't have valued it as much.

### KEY POINTS FROM JULIE

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#### 1. Personal and key points

- We spent quite a lot of time before the rest of the group came on board
- During that time I was getting a grasp of what was happening here and finding out and identifying **with what was in the vision** and the stuff that Faith had written
- I felt very much that that was where I was at
- We talked a lot about dissemination and that was quite important in terms of **getting the management on board** and you were still in the process of your MA
- I now carry on with the enthusiasm but not with the energy I had right from the start because I have had to take over from Howard (Land Manager)

#### 2. Group and what happened in process – perceptions

- Chris Clarke (Coming Home) weekend was at the beginning of our process and so there was his input actually coming through since we met with him quite often
- When the others joined us it felt **very out of sync** because we had spent a lot of time and it felt like we were miles ahead of them in terms of what it could mean at Holton Lee and what could be here
- It took quite a **long time** to get the group together, which felt frustrating, we were all **coming from different places spiritually**, on our own **journeys**, therefore felt we were all **shooting off in different directions on different things**
- Also in terms of meeting and the way we were structuring.
- Getting a definition or statement was an important **part of enabling** us to focus and **find a meeting place amongst us**
- We had to think about **who was going to read it**

- And what we are **trying to communicate**
- All that was very hard: ok if you had a recent MA in Spirituality and **knew what you were talking about** but others coming in didn't have a clue about what we were talking about
- And so we **had to put it in simple language** that isn't likely to put people off and that
- **Wording and language were an issue** even within the group
- We had to find the right way of **listening to each other** and
- Find ways of **writing something that we could all sign up to** without completely watering it down which was the big **danger**
- One of earliest criticisms is that it did **sound a bit nebulous** and nothingish once we had produced it – the short statement
- We learned if we tried to thrash things out **word by word** in the group, it would never happen so we delegated and partitioned responsibility
- We avoided **Christianity in the first statement**
- It is **still a big issue** within the group and for **people outside** it is quite a **sensitive area**
- Still lots of **assumptions** flying around in terms of Christianity and where Holton Lee is and **Where we are as a group**
- And still assumptions which have **not really come to the surface** partly because we can use **the same words** and still be understanding something different and it is difficult to know how to deal with that.
- We have **learned** that it is in the **whole process of listening to each other, respecting each others** views and being prepared to **not hold too tightly to our own particular ways** of seeing things (same as Alan)
- We have different denominational backgrounds and apart from the **terms** we would probably been closer together in our views say 10 years ago than we are now,
- Each one of us is in a very **different part of our journey** since then
- That does give us a **kind of common ground** in that we know the **language** and where people are coming from even if that is not what we think
- We can think individually and also need an organisational understanding and the **difficulty is squaring that up** with saying that we are **inclusive**
- We talked a lot about that and said it would have to be at the discretion of the person booking people in as to who to accept here from the **wide spectrum** we talked about
- There are always going to be such individual cases (Liz talked about this) and so I don't think that you can write that into a **policy** other than to mention **discretion**
- It was **very challenging for the group** to have to open up and go broader and I suspect there are still some whose inner hope is that those coming on site would move toward the **Christian belief**
- Even if we say we are not trying to **covert people**, the energy may still be in wanting to move that way instead of **giving people complete freedom** to find whatever answers they find for themselves

### 3. **Organisation – structure and re-structuring and how it functions – what has happened.**

- The way we held the meetings felt far **too business like** and driven when we first started,
- This huge pressure felt completely **out of tune** with the whole theme of what we were talking about ie spirituality
- Felt cut and dried saying we had to come up with an answer – didn't feel right and helpful
- Was frustrating and discouraging

- But we **talked about it and we made changes** so the feel of the meeting is very different now in a positive way
- It helped to have allocated ½ days for relaxed discussion on a topic rather than feeling it was a point on an agenda that we had to come up with an answer within 2 minutes
- It helped that we divided the meeting into 2 sections: agenda for business and discussion on a topic
- But there is still so much that goes on in the **agenda** that we haven't found the best way around it yet
- Because we were being **pushed** that meant that **there wasn't the time to listen** and that meant that **people didn't get properly heard as well** ( point out this difficulty to establish something as a group vs an individual just taking authority alone as dept head etc vs being corporate) (all same as Alan)
- When we were talking at the beginning it became very **highlighted that the way the organisation was structured was completely out of tune with what it was that we were trying to talk about** which is saying this is how we need to be
- It was around the time of the **building project and who was going to be Architect**
- It was a **very tense time within the whole organisation**
- And the **structure showed it and proved itself to be very destructive** to the organisation and that big change was made then (Sam Field day)
- We had been suggesting that the spirituality group needed to have input time in trustees meetings
- The **huge frustration** was that we **had no power** and it didn't make any difference what we felt, unless it was **shared by those who were making the decisions** otherwise it was a **waste of time**
- It does feel a bit better now and there is an overall sense within the **organisation** that there is not that same frustration and pressure – it has shifted
- In the big shake-up
- Feels **energy is being generated by this group** and has actually had its **effects** some of it indirectly but it is there within the organisation with direct and non-direct influence
- We had no opportunity to manipulate even if we had wanted to
- There have also been quite a few major Staff changes not planned and major changes within the organisation not planned, over the period of time we have been meeting
- Which has been **significant** not that we can claim credit for it
- There was a **big gap** with lack of personnel management structure with staff and volunteers and is still largely true
- Another consideration of the group affect is to consider whether the **group had an influence on the changes** because the **Director has been part of the group?**
- He has been **influenced** by the things that have happened and if he hadn't been part of it **would the group still be powerless?**  
which might suggest something about **power structure** which is a big question since he has all the influence right across the board and if **he wasn't on board** with what we were doing it would **be a non-starter**

#### Four Aspects

- yes he is committed to all four aspects but there is time **when energy is focused on one or the other of them**
- it will always be people's choices and unrealistic to expect that everybody will be equally interested in all the Aspects

- there will be **specialisations** but hopefully an acknowledgement and acceptance of the others even if they don't want to particularly be a part of that

## 27<sup>th</sup> October (Awareness Raising Day)

- we talked about consciousness and awareness raising and thought of a day with Chris Clarke facilitating and kept saying we must have it but that **we are not ready yet**
- because we had to **get more clear before it could actually happen**
- we **needed to know between ourselves what it was we were trying to do**
- or who we **wanted to do it for** or if everybody should be there together
- taking so long seems an **extremely inefficient way of working** but that is probably reflected in the **whole area of spirituality** and spiritual growth
- because by and large it is **a very gradual process** there may be **key times** when something significant really shifts but is **a very slow almost imperceptible happening** (like Tony chaos sand theory)
- only can see it **when you get to a cusp point** maybe at a point of conflict when something comes up
- 27<sup>th</sup> Oct was a **very significant day**
- surprised that so many did come, encouraging with wide spectrum of the organisation present
- reflecting back sensed how important it was
- wasn't just a question of **us** looking back and identifying what happened but **actually during the day particular individuals in that wider group** were realising things, recognising that some things were happening and making **connections**.
- So it was very much an **awareness-raising and increasing time**, not something **done by us**
- It wasn't a question of **doing things** but **we created the space for something to happen**
- We didn't impose, or load people with **lots of definitions** or ask them to come up with their own or to critique ours
- It was just for them to say whatever came

## As land manager and volunteer co-ordinator

- Not time or energy to incorporate spirituality into those areas
- But on work days volunteers do say how peaceful it is here
- See quite an **imbalance** however with **spirituality and the environment not being addressed**
- Things are done because they have to be done in terms of **conservation** or to make the site **accessible**.
- That could be relevant because it does provide something for disabled visitors so all intrinsically in the environment becomes **available to them**, so is opening up possibilities
- We don't get extra kudos for it either as a centre

## Naming spirituality and where happening, applied and qualities and gaps?

- Being in **relationships** is the main thing
- but also most likely place for problems to arise, **personality clashes**. (Jean)
- Which is more on a **personal level** but maybe the **organisation can help us to provide the environment** where it facilitates individuals to live that way
- This is different than other places because **I was thinking it is happening more apart from the structures** which are there as backup as in any organisation

- But to be a part of Holton Lee it is **something about individual commitment** and it may be that the **environment** in its broadest understanding is **more enabling** – in terms of what peoples' **own personal capabilities are** (like Jean, Jeanne and Tony and Alan)
- You **can't organise it** (spirituality)
- And maybe have to **risk not being able to ensure it**
- **The vision can be named and written down** and people working or visiting here who could then say that is **not** how I experience it and what you are saying is not true.
- That could be really **the only check on it** (therefore important to name and write down)
- It is like a **quality**
- We can't **establish a spirituality praxis here** but we can encourage it and can **only create the conditions in which it is nurtured**
- **Therefore need to name conditions and focus** on them recognising that you can't ultimately name spirituality
- Can note blocks almost by looking at it **in the negative way**, being able to say God is not this rather than God is exactly this. Spirituality is connected with images and concepts of God and is nebulous.
- The worse thing about when things like WACO, go wrong, is that **it does not get noticed until it is too late.**
- Need **someone to keep finger on the pulse and stay close to it** (all interviews said this)
- Still wouldn't be clear signs identifying if the problem is something the whole organisation or rather just that two people can't get on.
- We have been talking about **inter-relationships within the organisation** and one of the current tensions/attentions in the spirituality group is the whole idea of encouraging spirituality here **by presenting courses**
- Maybe can be a greater focus on how **we relate** to the others outside of us, in terms of whether we are talking about God or Mother etc which is a different level than the interpersonal but must be equally an aspect of what we focus on and how we feel we can go about that.
- Is it something we want to **just allow to happen** if it happens or be more directive by putting on something that gives people **a more direct opportunity to explore that for themselves?**

## GAP

- **Four Aspects = we would still need a lot more exploring and articulating on that**
- since there are different levels at which it can be recognised, superficially listening without ever questioning why does that matter or can say it matters because **the organisation works better if we know that there is actually still a much deeper level** since we as people are **affected in our spirituality by all of these which impinge on ourselves**
- Yes, guests may say they experience this but we **still have no way** of doing or touching into that at the moment; we can see it is happening
- Maybe we need to provide something for people to be able to say it
- at the moment it is just us saying "well that's nice; glad you had a good time"
- a huge area we have yet to step into or maybe we don't want to
- if we are not going to then we are **not doing anything more than just creating good working relationships which maybe we are then being a bit pretentious in calling it spirituality**



- we have come a long way
- we have recognised that something really important, that was a **vital part and integral part** of the original vision, had almost **got lost** and what we are trying to do is **re find it**.
- But there **can never be** “shared intent” with **trustees** as decision makers since they don’t have the capacity to be aware of it, which may sound arrogant, but some people will be able to grasp what it is and the depth that it needs to be held, which has got to be **very very deep in a few** and then **shared more superficially with the whole lot**. It can never be expected that the whole lot will share it at that depth that the few have; that wouldn’t be **realistic**.
- Is that a principle relatable to any other organisation? Or what about some who are very evangelical
- You would have to sign up for it in some organisations and sign a statement of belief (relates to what Tony and Alan and group said about hiring new staff)
- Also important to know **motives for the organisation being interested** in spirituality
- It seems to be a movement that people are at this place and if we focus on it we’ll get more work out of our employees?
- Therefore it is in the interest of the organisation that they jump on this **bandwagon**?
- Hope Holton Lee motive is different just recognising that **it is inherently important that we see it and therefore is part of our vision – putting our energies into it** (and therefore we can act as a model in our case study because our motives are different therefore is deep spirituality which others can compare themselves with)

#### 4. **The tomorrow**

#### 5. **Fruits of the research process**

- it is difficult to say if there would have been a difference without the group because it is one of those things that you can’t prove
- but it is possible to imagine there would have been **greater disintegration within the organisation**
- we can say that the **process has been a catalyst** within the organisation and to individuals so it has had an impact
- not reasonable to think that the **vision** can be held anywhere other than this group, there is no other place
- but that could be something we could **flag up** and say we see it as a need. (**GAP**)
- maybe on an **on-going basis there needs to be a place where the vision is held**
- and not realistic to say it is trustees since they are there in the depth needed (differs from Jeanne)
- not reasonable to expect they should since they each have their **own specialisations** so maybe there always needs to be a **spirituality vision holding group** of 2-3 people, taking the pulse

We talked about **family ethos** and she said

- It is there and happening now but no guarantee that that generational interest may not become separated in the future.

## KEY POINTS LEARNED AT PERSONAL, GROUP AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVELS

### 1. Key points learned at a personal level

- recognising that spirituality is intangible, almost like a call or vocation as a spiritual journey
- with spirituality woven throughout the organisation
- important to connect head and heart, for an earthed spirituality
- finding God under every stone – important to spend time at Holton Lee to experience spirituality there
- on-going deep experience and others in the group drew me into deeper awareness
- realise we are on cutting edge and on track with other groups around the world therefore stretching boundaries.

### 2. Key points learned at the “us” or group level

- Time was needed to get a collective statement with a real process, that is, not with a statement being imposed on the group. There are no quick fixes, which don't last, especially about tenuous subjects like spirituality. We also need to be able to say what we think, clearly. We need Trustees who can work together with the people who actually shape the organisation, working together in a process, and that in turn is a resource, which has an impact on the organisation.
- It is important to name the process involved in being corporate and be able to come to a common understanding. It is also important to be able to outline how to make groups feel safe enough for significant sharing to happen. We need to explore the understanding of power vs. responsibility in leadership. It is actually in living it out and thus modelling what we are “talking” about. We moved from theory to practice as we were changed which allowed us to live with integrity. Spirituality emerges in a “bottom up” process and through “living” it out and reflects what we have been through ourselves
- Time and commitment are needed with someone to start the idea off. It was good to have someone to start the process, who had a vision for a spirituality group, to give out papers and ask questions
- It was good to have the focus of the needed statement, which took a year or more to write.
- The use of language and words was a problem and so required time and commitment, a: since there was some difficulty reading the academic papers handed out and b: because we all had different theological and spiritual backgrounds. However our understanding was richer and there was less danger of simply settling for “normative” thinking or theory. Some words didn't have the same meaning for us all and sometimes we didn't discover that until some time later. Conversely, we were able to recognise a common denominational language because of our various backgrounds within mainstream theology.
- Our understanding of “Christian” spirituality is still a dilemma for us particularly since Holton Lee has Christian roots. We recognised that our concerns are not only personal but include those which we are pursuing for the sake of the organisation, especially with our policy of inclusivity, which required us to consider the dilemma in much more depth. To attempt to wed our organisational aims with inclusivity and spirituality praxis is difficult and therefore it has been a challenge for us to both

be broad and to have a common organisational understanding of spiritual belief and practice. Eventually we will need to articulate our understanding of Christianity and to include a page in our policy for the future; one which all trustees can agree.

- The importance of our process of listening, respecting and not holding to our own views tightly is something that most in the group emphasized. The problem with time constraints pointed to the fact that we continually had to learn how to deal with “research” at the same time as “development”. We had to learn, in real time, how to wed theory and practice, while taking into consideration the real problem we have with lack of time in a financially struggling, short staffed secular charity, yet also being able to conduct group meetings which do reflect the real needs of the group, that is, the need for: time, respect, getting and content being decided on.
- It was important that we could really listen to each other particularly since it wasn't an easy group at the beginning and simply being “polite” with each other would not have allowed us to come to grips with the issues we were addressing. Instead we did try to resolve conflict and not collude or compromise, which was necessary to get a good statement, one, which was not watered down, which was especially necessary for the sake of the organisation.
- Some thought, initially, that we would have to have conflict management. However, the idea of process seemed to make tacit awareness explicit in some ways and helped us to keep going as we began to recognise, even though not initially articulated, the importance of being able to move beyond just our own self interest.
- Starting our meetings with quiet reflection or symbolic expression slowed us down and may have helped us to move to a more reflective space, since it has more to do with right brain activity. Therefore we were able not only to focus on business but also on relationship, listening, respecting, mutuality, trusting, valuing, and exploring, with our hearts as well as with our heads. This initially seemed risky for us, that is, to bring and share what had personal meaning for us but the end result was that we did become cohesive as a group.

### **3. Key points on what was learned at the “us of the Organisational level**

- We can't plan everything, so in order to progress things within the organisation, on-going work, co-operation and participation is needed because structures themselves don't work otherwise.
- Organisations are made up of people not structures, otherwise they are dead “things” or clever ideas only, but it is the people that enliven, and make it work and they need commitment and the ability to work in teams.
- As an organisation we are inclusive and not directive and therefore are empowering and enabling of people, who are treated with mutuality and respect within relationships where they have equal opportunity.
- This research process did not give us a quick fix and was slow but did enable ownership and growth. It was important to fully and truly go through the whole process of learning cycle and not miss out on the middle two cycles.
- Process is a two way street of reciprocal relationship, where trust creates trust and empowers people and the organisation, and thus leads to more satisfaction.
- The way we shared, were open and lived at depth engendered a similar response and connecting with others since
- It was important for us to spend time and have our own embodied knowing, which was not obtained vicariously through others. This is necessary for shared intent and not obtainable in any other way.



- Spirituality and love go together and lead then to relationship, with self, others, Divine and our global home.
- We need to keep working at developing spirituality praxis with awareness, going with it and not forcing it, because otherwise it is not true spirituality of the bottom up kind but instead a top down "trying" imposed on others, not coming from the heart of love.
- In our process of learning we became aware and then convinced of the need to integrate all aspects of the founding vision and by so doing have begun to impart that awareness to others within the organisation and they, in turn, have begun to act on that awareness.
- It is necessary to have a group to hold the vision otherwise it is in danger of perishing. It was stated that any of us could now reflect the group as a whole, which indicates that we did gel, which is a fruit of our hard work together as a group and so we have achieved shared intent and confidence in our "we"ness. This statement is in contrast to our beginnings as a group and was very costly in length of time and energy, and required great commitment and learning and change on our part.
- It is important to recognise that through a few of us talking, as a group, we were able to highlight a fault in the structure of the organisation; as "pilot group" of committed people we were willing to speak up and challenge the "system" and its existing structures because we recognised that we had no power unless it was shared with decision makers. This point therefore underlines the fact that it is so important to have shared intent within the organisation, where we all embrace the same "mission" and can sing the same tune.
- A lot of major changes seemed to occur during the period we have been meeting and this fact could be related to another statement one of the co-researchers said which is that people either fitted in with the ideology or ethos or it became quite clear to them that they didn't and so wanted to leave or have left. This awareness is important when we are hiring or firing people in the future.
- Organisations do need some sort of person to help with relationships difficulties and conflict perhaps in the shape of personnel management.
- One co-researcher asked that if we hadn't had the director in the group would we still be powerless. As researcher/worker I did ask him to be in the group since I knew that he needed to be on board and abreast of what we were progressing, for several reasons: since spirituality is a new field and an undeveloped aspect within Holton Lee; that it is hard to communicate what "spirituality" means at the best of times; that the director is a key player and pivotal in the organisation obviously; I didn't want to waste my/our time if he wasn't in agreement; he is a link to the trustees too especially at the beginning when there wasn't a broad understanding and before the other two Trustees were asked to become part of a group.
- In considering the four aspects one co-researcher stated that we need integration and shared intent about our mission, yet we also need to recognise different skills or areas of work, yet we each have to have enough awareness and support of the other aspects, even if we aren't directly involved in them.
- We needed time to be able to process our understanding as a group in order to become cohesive enough to share with others. We moved beyond our tacit knowing and made it explicit within the group, and after we were able to articulate it, we shared this "codified knowledge" or grounded theory, which emerged from our group, with others in the organisation. We also recognised that it did not then mean imposing our understanding or definitions but rather to create space for people to be in a learning process of their own, recognising the fact that it has taken us three years to begin to understand something of what spirituality is about.
- This slow research process may seem inefficient but that is probably reflected in the whole area of spirituality and spiritual growth since is a gradual process, which

is very slow, with almost imperceptible happenings which you can often only see when you get to a cusp point, through a point of conflict or when something comes up.

- We learned on the awareness-raising day that it is not “doing” to people and imposing definitions or theories on them from the top down with our understanding, knowledge, intellectual theory or information, but rather to create a safe space for others so their own process of knowing can emerge and so then they themselves made connections and recognised that something was happening.
- We recognised that we needed both time and energy to incorporate and link spirituality with the other aspects at Holton Lee, which is particularly difficult when one is overly busy, only working part time or when there is lack of necessary funding. In that sense spirituality involves time and money.
- Spirituality happens in relationships particularly if the organisation can help to provide a conducive environment, which facilitates a quality of life; this environment itself can enable people to develop their own capabilities. It could follow then that we can name or recognise “spirituality” happening by its fruits, that is, in good relationships or in personal growth. These fruits then are tangible, practical and experienced and therefore less ethereal.
- We can’t organise or ensure spirituality but can instead provide structures, which “enable” and empower people. Spirituality has more to do with “being”, with an ethos or quality of life, and so is not very tangible and therefore can’t be organised.
- We can name blocks and which helps us to also recognise if there are certain qualities which aren’t present, which might begin to be a cause for worry, for example, if people aren’t caring or are relating badly; like a bad apple, deceit can start to set in and produce suspect fruits, as in the WACO community in the USA which went badly wrong. Therefore, we need to monitor and note inconsistencies and ensure that the practice is kept healthy. It is important that when we hire people in the future we can explain both healthy characteristics and blocks with regard to spirituality. Also we need to know healthy perimeters in order to keep taking the pulse, that is, so that there is a commonly and organisationally understood rule of thumb or bottom line in what we agree our ethos is. Some of Faith’s foundational principles could apply here.
- In order to design and present courses at Holton Lee, which obviously involves relating to others outside of the organisation, we will first have to discuss and then agree about what we would want to say. This will require us to do a lot more exploration before we will be able to articulate how the four aspects interface and are able to be integrated with each other.
- Any of us within the organisation might have a superficial understanding of how the Four Aspects interrelate, but we still have work to do in helping people to also understand how each of the aspects impinges on each of us individually and organisationally. If there isn’t that integration, then all that we are offering is the creation of good working relationships, and therefore it seems pretentious to call what we offer “spirituality”, if there isn’t that integration. The whole of what we offer affects guests who stay and it all works cohesively together so they can have a holistic experience.
- “Shared intent” is not possible with all people within the organisation, especially with all of the Trustees, particularly because of the depth of understanding required. Not all of the other co-researchers shared this opinion. One or two have written differently, saying that it is a shared remit between the trustees and the spirituality group. We can be reminded that it took us, as individuals within the spirituality group, nearly three years to have enough shared intent and understanding to be able to put on the half day awareness-raising session.



- The roots of Holton Lee include a long-standing practice, which emerged from the Lees family and Post Green community. We have progressed from individual to group to the organisation in our research process and so the timing in that has been very important, once again, emphasising the importance of not missing out the middle two steps of the reflective learning cycle.
- An awareness that emerged within the group process as we considered spirituality praxis was that the brief of the research group included an awareness of the undergirding ethos because spirituality has to do with ethos.
- It is a good and necessary idea to hire someone but we also need the unique combination of both the necessary money as well as someone with the vision of Holton Lee, along with a structure in place to ensure that the vision is held; we would need a job description for the person and a business plan
- The ethos is a structural thing too and hard to define and talk about versus the more tangible aspects such as the arts and environment/land, therefore “Spirituality” needs lots of awareness-raising and naming and so, in the meantime, is precarious and vulnerable until something is put in place and that is what this research was about.
- It takes a long time to pick up the ethos, which happens mainly through practical involvement and of actually “living it”.

Holton Lee is a centre that engages with spirituality and personal growth in ways that are relevant to the 21st century, providing a forum for discussion and practical exploration.

This is a new post and an exciting opportunity. Holton Lee (East Holton charity) was conceived in 1982 and became operational in 1985 with the opening of the first phase, consisting primarily of the Barn, offering good quality, accessible short-stay residential accommodation. Additional accommodation has been developed to provide more flexible options in Gileway, Woodlands and Actives Colleges, offering self-catering accommodation with the aim. Phase two was the recently finished Farmhouse and the construction of Park House (chosen by the Guardian newspaper as the Best British Building of the Year 2012), providing accommodation for workshops, training, conferences, exhibitions and performances.

In addition there is an Arts Pavilion, organic garden and 350 acres of largely 3000 year old special scientific interest land comprising heathland, woodland, lakes, reed beds and saltmarsh bordering Poole Harbour.

Phase three (2013) will extend the Barn, construct artists' studios and create a Disability Arts Archive.

#### Job Description

The primary function of the post is to develop Personal Growth and Spirituality in line with Holton Lee's mission statement and the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect policy in ways that research and empower people. The post-holder will be based at Holton Lee, but will be expected to network with like organisations and individuals locally and wider afield and keep abreast with developments in the area of personal growth and spirituality.



## PERSONAL GROWTH AND SPIRITUALITY DEVELOPMENT WORKER POST HOLTON LEE, POOLE, DORSET.

Reporting to: the Director of Holton Lee Responsible to: Holton Lee Trustee Board

### **General Introduction**

Holton Lee works within four main interactive aspects: the Arts, Disability, the Environment and Personal Growth & Spirituality.

The organisation arises from a Christian heritage but is respecting and open to those of all faiths or none. It seeks to service church and other groups in their own programmes and to provide a space in which individuals can develop for themselves.

We are looking to employ someone who will work with the Director to develop the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect in an innovative way and raise the profile of Holton Lee as a centre that engages with spirituality and personal growth in ways that are relevant to the 21st century, providing a forum for discussion and practical exploration.

This is a new post and an exciting opportunity. Holton Lee (East Holton charity) was conceived in 1992 and became operational in 1996 with the opening of the first phase, consisting primarily of the Barn, offering good quality, accessible short-stay residential accommodation. Additional accommodation has been developed to provide more flexible options in Gateway, Woodland and Ashtree Cottages, offering self-catering accommodation within the site. Phase two saw the recently renovated Farmhouse and the construction of Faith House (chosen by the Guardian newspaper as the Best British Building of the Year 2002), providing accommodation for workshops, training, conferences, exhibitions and performances.

In addition there is an Arts Pavilion, organic garden and 350 acres of largely SSSI (site of special scientific interest) land comprising heathland, woodland, fields, reed beds and saltmarsh bordering Poole Harbour.

Phase three (2003) will extend the Barn, construct artists' studios and create a Disability Arts Archive.

### **Job Description**

The primary function of the post is to develop Personal Growth and Spirituality in line with Holton Lee's mission statement and the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect policy in ways that resource and empower people. The post-holder will be based at Holton Lee, but will be expected to network with key organisations and individuals locally and wider afield and keep abreast with developments in the area of personal growth and spirituality.

The post-holder will:

- develop and promote appropriate courses, workshops, symposia and exhibitions relevant to our vision and mission and find appropriate facilitators.
- deal with requests for counselling, spiritual direction, retreats and quiet days, liaising with key Holton Lee staff and approved counsellors/therapists, spiritual directors and facilitators.
- be responsible for the advertising of facilities and professional services for the above.
- produce promotional materials, educational resources for guests and occasional articles about Personal Growth and Spirituality.
- continue to network and interface with others in the field.
- facilitate in-house awareness raising for staff, trustees and volunteers.
- work in line with the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect policy, evaluating it in liaison with the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect advisory group.
- represent the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect group at quarterly Development group meetings, working with the other Aspect groups, staff and volunteers to deliver Holton Lee's overall mission statement.
- fundraise for the long-term future of the post.

### **Person Specification**

The post-holder will:

- be someone who actively pursues their own personal development and spirituality
- have the ability to work with a wide range of people and have good communication skills
- be computer literate
- be in agreement with Holton Lee's vision and mission statement
- be a self-starter, able to work from their own initiative within the limited resources of an independent charity.
- be able to work within a team across the different Aspects of the organisation.
- have good organisational skills including: running of workshops, seminars and other events; PR & marketing; fundraising; budget setting and management.
- be willing to work flexible hours including at weekends.

- be someone who is professionally qualified in counselling and spiritual direction or who can ensure that Holton Lee continues to offer these services according to the appropriate code of ethics and professional guidelines.

**Terms and Conditions**

As this is a new post we wish to remain open about discussing hours, remuneration and personal access/impairment issues. This is to ensure that we can work towards recruiting the best candidate for the post and address any employment barriers.

It is intended that this post will be a minimum of three days/week in order to cover all aspects of the position.

Holton Lee occupies a rural location; access to public transport is poor and limited. Travel expenses are payable at standard rates.

**Holton Lee mission statement:**

"...empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and Disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality"

- *Mike*: Holton Lee development is not finished yet, still happening and evolving, still feeling its way and growing and we make it up as we go along, like a jazz improvisation which we see after it has happened, which is the essence of the beast or else it is dying, so the process goes on again. It is hard to sell to jet setters with tick box questionnaires, hard to get over the message to someone who has never been here and therefore hard to fund.
- *Liz*: No one should be in a box e.g. disabled people and carers or spirituality/personal growth since it pervades all of the organisation and should be in the back of our minds only so it is harder for funders since we can't put it into a sentence for big funders. Our literature is like Blanc Mange – Holton Lee is special and can't be put into four boxes.
- The Four aspects are irritating since we are one holistic thing, and we get bogged down with words, even in the Mission statement – or with "Faith" house – with people asking who do they think they are at Holton Lee? The written word is patronising for those "poor" people, therefore we get a weird image put on us which people don't feel when they get here.
- *Tony* you need ingredients for Blanc Mange to make it so we need a structure, not boxes, for the principles of clear thinking. We isolate out for questioning, taking responsibility for issues, legislation, and equipment. Those involved in the Disability Equality Training are trying to address misguided oppressive thinking in structures by well-meaning people so it is important to put a box around for those reasons. For example, in order to develop current thinking in the environment or in the arts, eg are DABHANDS participants painting art? (The Disability Artists group which works/meets at Holton Lee weekly)
- *Eugene* said that it is a bit of each of those things, since people function in different ways re the written word or what they experience since we have to receive by methods which are suitable for us as individuals. Therefore there is no right or wrong answer, to describe in a whole, intellectually in our minds, for instance, four boxes in a structured whole, for other people boxes may be alien and they need concepts so there is no easy answer. We therefore may have a dozen points of view.
- However, as an organisation we still need an interactive policy, so *Tony* proposed that the dialogue continue in each Aspect Group in relationship to our Mission statement. Each aspect group can ask if we should even write an interactive policy. Then we can bring it all back to the next DG meeting. Maybe we will have to replace the Mission statement as a result?
- *Mike* thought it might be a slogan and not a policy. We had the same problem as I said on the Spirituality day, when manufacturers have a product they need to market it with a label and package it to be easily digested in one mouthful by people.
- *Jeanne* thought we should think about how we would want to express it
- *Liz* asked if the "splodge" re Personal Growth/Spirituality, Arts, and Environment is "to" disabled people? She suggested that the main thing that we "do" is the Barn. It is a major piece of work, which isn't even reflected in our statements or blurb.
- *Tony* suggested that we could remedy that by saying "by providing the Barn" or "by providing 350 acres." Etc. We say, "come and see" and when people do they give us money. It is hard to brand us but it is exciting. We are difficult to pin down, since we are not "about" this, that and the other.
- *Alan* said whatever literature you read – it is never the same when you get there. The relationship to the written word is difficult, when you want to try to understand a place before you book it.
- *Eugene* suggested that we need to be understood like a brand name like "Heinz" is.
- *Sarah* thought that to bring this discussion together in the DG meeting was a good debate and that we need a "strap line".

## **Orthopraxis and liberation theology: understood as a bridge between spirituality, theology and religion**

Through the rigour and discipline of our research we were assisted in our attempt to ensure an understanding of sound practice of theology and spirituality, particularly since our inquiry included an integrated and felt perspective of life and meaning. Our emerging understanding of spirituality required us to guard against collusion or mistaken identity with theologies or theories, which are either normative or unsound. Many people today are left without a solid and sound theoretical academic understanding and underpinning and certainly our need was for an inclusive and authentic, broad, sound understanding of spirituality, theology and religion. It was implicit that we have a holistic viewpoint and overview, rather than one that was simply isolated within and emerging from our own “particular” local context, understanding and Case Study. Therefore through extensive literature research and review, various voices and perspectives from others, who concern themselves with theology and spirituality, have contributed to our theoretical understanding as elaborated below. In fact it seems since I began study in this field there has been even more escalating confusion in the sense that there is more being written from many sources and perceptions. I include here recent opinions which highlight and epitomize the current on-going struggle, confusion and debate of which we remain a part. It is therefore, not only helpful, but also critical for us to learn and become more informed particularly since we are asked so many questions about this “Aspect” by those who visit Holton Lee. Our context is complicated since we are a secular voluntary sector Charity with Christian roots, with a mission to equally welcome all people, of all faiths and none. I have grouped our understanding into eight contributions below.

### ***i. Spirituality***

In the *Living Spirituality News* Spring 2003 Beverley McAinsh wrote about the dilemma and conflict between spirituality and theology, quoting the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, who recently wrote in the press of the “something” in spirituality which is “escapist, shallow and self-indulgent”. She added the misgivings renowned theologian James Alison shared at a recent conference: “for me, spirituality is a meaningless concept ... and a rather troubling one.” She herself believes that “spirituality provides a useful and very welcome language through which to explore and articulate the experience of journeying with and towards God.” She points out that it is a fluid, evolving language, full of metaphor, analogy and poetry but a language which embraces and celebrates the entirety of human experience in a way that theological language rarely does. She believes that is why it appeals so widely among those on the edges of, or outside of, traditional churches. She queries if the “spirituality” honeymoon is over and if so the call to courage is very important since, as Rudolph Bora states “... the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure”.

### ***ii. On-going tension between spirituality and theology***

The tension between the two fields continued while we ourselves continued to live and search in the gap, therefore continuing to “experience” the dilemma and confusion. As we have now understood, praxis emerges from the combination of theory and practice and we are dealing with a new academic field. There has been a long-standing divorce and separation between spirituality and theology, with spirituality being interpreted as emotional and theology as intellectual in the current situation. However today spirituality demands to be taken seriously as an area of study in its own right and not subordinate to theology. Spirituality has been accused of not defining its own methods very precisely, so

some theologians have tried recently to provide a coherent definition and methodology, particularly as they are recognising “spirituality” as interdisciplinary in its concern with the specifically “spiritual” dimension of life. The concept of spirituality is also used beyond explicitly religious circles but generic definitions also have severe limitations since the way that we understand the concept of spirituality is ultimately dependent on quite specific religious perspectives. As a field of study “spirituality” examines the dimension of human existence from a variety of standpoints and previously “theology” has been predominantly analytical, logical and deductive in approach and so structured its approaches to spirituality similarly, separating it from concrete human experience. But now there are some contemporary attempts to rebuild an intimate connection between spirituality and theology and so reflection on human experience as an authentic theological starting point has encouraged a movement away from static understandings and has moved towards a more inductive and experiential method. At the same time spirituality operates on the frontier between religious experience and inherited traditions. It has become clear therefore that spiritual traditions are embodied in people rather than in doctrine and begin with experiences rather than abstract ideas so both spirituality and theology appreciate “experience” which has led to a dialogue with other disciplines, a fruitful encounter which owes something to the contemporary theories of postmodernism which has had an effect on the study of religion. This shift allows conversation between different perspectives, presuppositions and methods in the search for meaning. Because there is an emphasis on “context”, within the field of spirituality, conversation with the social sciences has been necessitated; the socio-political approach is particularly noticeable in liberationist, feminist and justice-focused approaches to spirituality. Modern literature is also increasingly addressing the issues of deep meaning and belief; this unthematic and even agnostic spirituality has increasing attention and there is increasing dialogue between spirituality and science. (Sheldrake, 1998:33-64)

### iii. *Theology and Spirituality*

On a recent programme called “Something Understood”, titled “The Religious Requirements”, on Radio Four, 9 March, 2003, Mark Tully referred to the same article by *Rabbi Jonathan Sacks* and also interviewed *Rev Diarmuid O’Murchu*. I recorded and transcribed the programme, which seemed to pinpoint the crux of the current problem between spirituality and theology, as it was addressed and debated by two well-informed theologians, putting in a nutshell what I had been concerned with during the three years of research. There are no specific answers, only many remaining questions for us all. I have outlined key and relevant points for our further theoretical understanding below.

Tully asked if the church is a religious requirement or if we have to belong to a church to be religious or if we have to be religious to be spiritual? He said that there appears to be an ever-increasing number of people who reject all churches and all organised religion yet seek and often find spiritual meaning in life. There are still strong arguments against spirituality without religion and he wondered what we might be losing by neglecting tradition and organised communities of believers. Tully stated that Sacks offered one of the most powerful recent arguments for religion in his credo article in the Times where he wrote, “spirituality good-religion bad” which seems to be the current state in the Western soul. Sacks went on to argue that this phrase wasn’t true and that we needed to go beyond spirituality to a religion which connected us with the world beyond ourselves. The great religions are more than spirituality and he asked how we can translate our private experiences into the public world we share and make, how do we turn our intimations of eternity into a more gracious order of acts, relationships and institutions, how do we escape not from but into reality and how do we move from soul to society? Spirituality changes our mood, religion changes our lives; there is much positive about our search for spirituality but there is also something escapist, shallow and self-indulgent. Sacks believes



that the current cult of spirituality is the attempt to achieve the results of religion without the disciplines, codes and commitments of religion which is not good news. To discover God within the soul is easy but what is hard is to bring God into the world, with all its poverty, inequality, violence and terror and make it a home for his presence, celebrating his image in others. It takes real work, the long hard steady work of love in action, the loyalty in deed, and generosity to those who are different from you and commitment to those who do not yet share your blessings. He believes that is what makes pilgrims different from tourists, holy days different from holidays, commitment something greater than the search for experience. Religion starts in spirituality, what it asks of us next is where the real work of God begins. One of the conditional requirements of religion which runs contrary to the spirituality of our times is to fear God.

O'Murchu in his interview claimed that the aim of reclaiming spirituality is to unearth the growing spirituality consciousness that is erupting in our world today and specifically in the lives of those who have either veered away from or abandoned the practice of formal religion or may never have had a religion in the first place. The relationship between spirituality and the religious traditions originated some five thousand years ago and developed into the major faiths of today. He believes that, at least in theory, religion could be understood to be a further maturation of the spiritual hunger of humankind but now in retrospect there is a questioning about whether it is or not. He stated that it is quite important to establish the palaeontology behind spirituality. He said that we work with the principle, which is a principle all of the religions adopt as far as he knows, which is that God is fully at work in creation at every stage throughout the past four and one half million years and not just for the past two thousand as in the case of Christendom or the past five thousand as in the case of former religions. Through some of the astrological evidence from seventy thousand right up to the present time we can see that our species are behaving with quite a strong, call it religious awareness, if you wish. He prefers to keep a fairly clear-cut distinction between *spirituality and religion*, stating that, for him, religion is the formal practice of a faith built around a modern code and official form of worship and set of scripture, whereas spirituality is something much more amorphous and undefinable. But none the less while spirituality does translate into ritual behaviour and that's the bit for which we have the archaeological evidence in the way the dead were buried, as far back as seventy thousand years ago, it clearly shows that our species had an awareness of the Divine and they felt a need to ritualise that and they did it without any guidance from churches or religions and did it in quite a sophisticated way, at times.

He indicated that in religious terms or spiritual terms we are on the verge of something like a quantum leap and Tully asked if this meant that he thought that organised religion as we know it, that stage in the development of human beings, is over? O'Murchu replied that he has a sense that we are at quite a profound transition time in evolutionary terms and that Teilhard de Chardin said that from a biological point of view our species is pretty well complete, in other words, we have evolved biologically about as far as we can go. O'Murchu suggested that the threshold that we are at is not so much about further biological evolution or development but about the development of mind and spirit; in other words we are moving into a new evolutionary stage. He stated that he is excited by the suggestion in John's gospel of Jesus saying to his followers that it was important that he as biological Jesus go away so that the Spirit may come who will lead us into the whole truth, therefore it seems a crucial evolutionary time, in which he believes we are outgrowing rather than abandoning the need for the formal religion, and moving into a new era where spirituality is going to become important again, very important, but in time that too will be channelled into more structured forms because as social creatures we always need some structures. If the new evolutionary stage is more about mind and spirit rather than about biology, in the case of human beings or a focus on physicality or materiality in life generally, then it might bring with it a deeper and more coherent level of wisdom whereby

we can look back in history and hopefully not continue to repeat the same mistake, time and time again. He believes that the Kingdom of God is a new reign of God which is the heart and soul of our Christian faith, a new way of being in the world related to right relationships, marked by justice, love and liberation and compassion, which he is not sure requires a formal organised church, but does require communities of faith, groups of people that gather around the vision and explore together how do they live out this vision, as small fluid flexible groups with the emphasis on small fluid and flexible, which would be a vision of an ideal church.

Tully pointed out that the fear of the Lord is a religious requirement and so of course is Love of the Lord and so for him one of the problems with *spirituality without religion* is that it doesn't provide those incarnations. Those Gods who are human and hence so much easier to love than the invisible God. He felt himself coming down on the side of organised religion but asked what should we require of it? and what would bring those who seek spirituality without religion back to the Church? He himself believes that it is a place to share about our pain, doubts and hope and cited that in a recent article in the Guardian with a title, "A Listening Church" Richard Harries, the Bishop of Oxford, wrote: "people preach against the churches theological ethic of command and obedience". Tully concluded that perhaps what is required of the church today is that it should listen more and preach less. It should share its own doubts, pains and fears and pointed out that O'Murchu has listened from within the church and articulated those voices who say that we are on the verge of a quantum leap forward spiritually, but still require communities of faith which will of course require organisation.

#### *iv. Spirituality, theology and religion*

Throughout the three years it was important for us to keep informed, current and abreast with thinking about what "spirituality" really means in any context, particularly in our search for an understanding which would be "inclusive" as Holton Lee attempts to be in each of the Aspects, and we didn't want to espouse just any theory. We have learned significantly from Theologian Sandra Schneiders who discusses spirituality and theology, giving sound theory while also pointing out concerns and paradoxes. She separates religious and non-religious spirituality saying that the ultimate value of the "*non-religious*" is that which claims one's whole life and energy and for the "*religious*" it is the triune God. She *defines spirituality* as: "The experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives". Here she herself is attempting to define spirituality broadly enough so that the definition can apply to religious and non-religious spirituality and yet specifically enough so that it does not include virtually anything that one espouses. She defines a triad of the terms of a. spirituality, b. religion and c. theology, which she believes are confusingly related and incorrectly opposed to each other; they are closely related and mutually implicating. I have summarised them below.

##### *a.) Spirituality*

Christian spiritualities have a specific context, which includes the Spirit, Trinity and Church and so on. They share the reality of spirituality with other traditions which are specifically religious, that is, theistic, such as Judaism and Hinduism, identifying God as the horizon of ultimate value. Others like Taoism and Buddhism are analogous to religions in that the horizon of ultimate value is transcendent although not identified as God. There are other spiritualities which are non-religious and recognise no transcendent reality and some spiritualities have both religious and non-religious forms such as feminist or ecological spirituality. She believes, along with many others, as we have read previously, that there is a good deal of "superficial dilettantism, dangerous cultism and sheer silliness that presents itself as spirituality today." She suggests that this has led some people to

dismiss any spirituality that is not related to or regulated by a classical religious tradition as worthless or dangerous, which she feels is a serious mistake since the thirst for meaning in life, the quest for self-integration, the desire for self-dedication to something larger than oneself is often very genuine, especially in the religious vacuum and because of the "... dismal record of hypocrisy, corruption and oppression in organised religion, the tendency of some to try to piece together a personal, authentic, non-religiously affiliated spirituality is very understandable." She adds that a person's spirituality even if naïve often provides a meeting ground that religion does not if we are willing to make the effort to understand the person's personal search.

#### *b.) Religion*

It is a cultural system for dealing with ultimate reality and religions are institutionalised in terms of creed, code and cult, that is, socially shared behavioural requirements to relate to the transcendent, as they perceive as ultimately important, taking the form of a creed or what they believe about their transcendental reality. The code is whatever they hold to be obligatory and their cult means how they express their dependence on the ultimate reality. "Religion is about the human relationship to the sacred, the ultimate, the transcendent, the divine" and is a *system* for dealing with that which transcends the individual or social entity. "Although institutions are notoriously prone to corruption, non-institutionalised spirituality, especially those unrelated to any religious tradition, are prone to extremism and instability", without the on-going corrective criticism of a historically tested community. She believes however that we also need to recognise that institutional religion is no guarantee of the living of its spirituality. So this is the paradox; the authentic tradition of spirituality has a tested wisdom to live by but it also provides a way to be publicly correct without ever becoming truly spiritual. The institution can be a poor vehicle of that tradition.

#### *c.) Theology*

It is defined as "faith seeking understanding" and it begins with a faith and commitment in trust and love to a self-revealing God in whom we believe. It is the ongoing *intellectual* attempt of the church to understand the faith we live and bring it to coherent culturally plausible expression.

Schneiders explains, that basic to spirituality, theology and religion, is a "faith, that is the unconditional trusting self-commitment to God in love", lived out in the experience of day-to-day self-integration, through just and loving relationships that we call spirituality, which arises within and is shaped by our religious tradition within which we are formed and live. And this tradition itself is institutionalised religion. Spirituality, that is, the living of our faith, is more fundamental and inclusive than religion and so we can free ourselves to engage with and embrace truths and values from outside our tradition which become evident to us, through our living of our faith long before the religious tradition or its institutionalism is ready to deal with them. For example, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue is much more advanced at grass roots level, among those who recognise the commonality of their spirituality or who have found it basic to their commitment to justice, than it is at the official level of discussions about theology or institutional religion. Contemporary developments such as feminism and ecology are being integrated into the spirituality of many Christians even as the officials of the church resist these challenges. It is the spirituality, the living of faith by committed believers, that is raising these questions and demanding an expansion of Christian vision to include them. The tension between a lived spirituality, ancient tradition and institutional religion is painful but also the only road to on-going development which can bring a tradition from rigidity and fatal sclerosis. In the process of expansion, which is glacially slow, it may seem nothing is changing but never before have we been able to know the beliefs and practices of other religious traditions and religions on the face of the earth. "This knowledge has undermined any

reasonable argument that Christianity is the one and only true religion that all humans are destined to embrace.” In our religiously plural world we have to pursue our spirituality in as deep and broad a way as possible, without defensiveness. Truth is qualitative and so we can enter the Holy Mystery we call God through many doors and enter the totality of ourselves, recognising that we cannot have the totality of possible experience of that Mystery, as we open ourselves to the witness of the those approaching the Mystery differently, otherwise we will remain paralysed in between. Today we are continually achieving a precarious understanding through an on-going interpretation of ever expanding data. We will never “get it right” in thought or action since life is a mysterious journey into the Holy Mystery we call God and we walk in wonder at what exceeds our intellectual grasp. So these three remain faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love. (Schneiders, 1999: web page)

#### *v. Embodied spirituality*

In our research we talked about “embodied spirituality” which is “lived spirituality” experienced in the whole of our being, in relationships with others at Holton Lee, that is with those who work there, are guests and those who visit. Therefore, we particularly needed a “spiritual and theological” understanding which can address the whole person, that is, head, heart, hands and feet, to overcome false dichotomies which also include that of the divine and human. Rahner offered us more sound theoretical perspectives saying too that we needed a new theological grammar for locating the centre and a spirituality for living within, because the heart is an embodied and affective unity of body and spirit, so when we act or speak from our heart, the intellect, will and gesture are one. The words of the Mystics are spoken from heart to the heart where spirit and flesh, concept and word, thing and image are still freshly one. Thus the dynamism of the human being is a radical unity with a movement of the heart, intellect, and freedom, will and love, which is achieved, in concrete embodiment. The dynamism of the heart of love is God’s grace present in the inmost core of each person. We are embodied spirit and therefore human knowing, choosing and loving have a physical dimension even while we are open to “more than” that which is grasped in objective knowledge. Our knowing transcends the limits of what we know objectively; open to this “something more”. However, that we are genuinely spirit, cannot be proved from the outside and can only be grasped explicitly through reflexive process known with transcendental knowledge. God is limitless as a mystery, and remains nameless and yet our openness towards God is the essence of personal becoming. We cannot be understood from the outside as object but empathetically from inside out, which happens through love when one desires to be present to another. We come to ourselves as persons and become persons through such openness to others and to God, in community with others and God, because human existence is essentially interpersonal. “The more one moves out towards the world of others and towards God, the more one is free to be one’s self.” Our humanity, that is, our self-presence, self-actualisation, freedom and love increase rather than decrease with proximity to God. This God is mystery and known as the silent unfathomable transcendent. No one’s mind or heart is compelled to acknowledge the reality of God. God is not grasped directly but indirectly through knowing, loving and choosing. Therefore we are free to choose. We can deny God implicitly with our hearts yet acknowledge divine reality explicitly or we can deny God’s existence explicitly in our mind while affirm it in our hearts through the stance we implicitly take toward divine reality in what we choose to know, value and love. “There is no love of God that is not, in itself, already love for neighbour; and love for God only comes to its own identity through its fulfilment in a love for neighbour.” True God love is embodied and fleshed out in the affairs of our daily lives, embodied in hands and feet and in responsibility for the social sphere. We need to be open spiritually by appreciating the incomprehensibility of God and acknowledging and valuing the diversity of cultures, philosophies, and theologies in the world church. To profess God is love is idle apart from

the effort to determine what love concretely is in each context with explicit tangible expressions of that love, particularly in our world where genuine love appears less and less to be at the heart of human existence. (Masson, 1984)

#### **vi. Divine reason**

Holton Lee's main leaflet states about the Personal Growth and Spirituality Aspect that: "*Holton Lee operates as a place of refuge, where people may discover ways of integrating the creative, spiritual and physical aspects of themselves, within a supportive environment.*"

We were and still are always attempting to understand the meaning of spirituality deeply and to "live it". Downey and Vanier explain that the Divine impulse is antecedent to understanding and it is through the language of the heart that we understand person as heart and in this way a "lived spirituality" of either a person or a group is motivated by the conviction that each human being is sacred because they are constituted at the most fundamental level by the heart, the region of the Spirit's work in persons. Therefore it isn't as good to take counsel simply according to human reason when we are moved by divine prompting which is a better principle. In the medieval period, the term heart described the whole total person and was the focus for personal life and union with God through love. (Downey and Vanier, 1986: 337-348) The main question then for Holton Lee and one which we should continue to ask on into the *Tomorrow*, is whether we are living out the love of the founding vision. How we are walking the talk or not - do people actually feel loved? Is Holton Lee still a City of Refuge and Love? Is God's love embodied in hands and feet and in responsibility for the social sphere? Our understanding of spirituality was in the context of living it out as well as in the context of research as we sought to know what spirituality meant. Those interviewed often referred to a quality of life, relationship and love, so perhaps it is still felt!

#### **vii. Finding sound theological Foundations**

Contemporary Jesuit theologian William Johnson gave further understanding about what is involved in the study of religion and theology. He believes that according to Lonergan, since the seventeenth century, the study of *religion and theology* as the science of God, which studied the human approach to God, took on an empirical methodology which emphasised observation, collection of data and elaboration of theories which dislikes abstract thinking. But this then led to an absence of God in the modern culture, but Longergan instead understood "knowing" as a process of experiencing, understanding and judging in obedience to transcendental precepts which can be "combined" with scientific methods. In other words we can be attentive to data, understand it with intelligence and make reasonable theory in an on-going way recognising that as we get more and more data we get more and more insights and so then we can make better and better theories; so the process goes on. However we then need to accompany this process with responsibility and with love so the theories and insights can then lead to self-transcendence and wisdom. God is both immanent and transcendent and such Love is a gift poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and is a call, which leads to wisdom. "The heart has its reasons that reason does not know" therefore wisdom or loving knowledge is obscure and not conceptual, transcending reasoning and thinking particularly since "God can be loved but God cannot be thought. There is "thinking power" by which we know creatures and a "loving power" by which we can know God. Love goes directly to God." This brings the highest compound of wisdom and love which is like a spring rising from within and flowing out on the surrounding world, showering living water on the whole human family and the whole universe, our home. This loving cannot be programmed and does not come from human

effort alone but is a religious phenomenon which goes on and on until our being becomes “being-in-love” which is at the very core of authentic religion. Love is not part of a scientific method but must be united with it if the method is to be fully human since it is only through love that there can be a fruitful marriage between science and religion, where love permeates the scientific enterprise in the heart of sincere and humble researchers as they seek to penetrate the secrets of reality, even then being led by God unknowingly, by the hand of God, who gives them their identity and holds all things in existence. The Spirit of Love, the Source of all existence, is the Being who cannot be encapsulated in words, letters or images. (Johnston, 2000:13)

#### ***viii. Scholarship – the role of study in an integrated spirituality***

Throughout our research process we have been studying “spirituality”, through our reading, discussion, practice and reflection. Study itself is understood as a prime way of acquiring knowledge, which is integral to human and Christian wholeness, and in particular religious study can sustain the integration of our faith with life as a whole. Thus increasing our knowledge of the things of God can increase our potential for love, love can follow upon knowledge; a deepening love can sharpen our conscience, which then seeks to know more intimately the truth that dictates loving conduct. Loving conduct is concrete because it includes both meeting needs or problems, and also addressing the causes of these needs and problems if they are to be eliminated, which then requires the study of issues and systems so that we can convey at least basic understanding to others, otherwise the practice will risk shallowness or even counter productiveness. During our research we were led to consider and address our organisational structure and infrastructure, as well as the broader world-view and understanding of spirituality and the need for inclusivity and mutuality with all people. The role of study in an integrated spirituality increases in proportion to one’s intellectual capacity and formation, therefore throughout our shared three-year process, we grew both in our intellectual cognitive understanding of spirituality as well as in our spiritual praxis, experience and formation at both at personal and organisational levels. (Noffke, 1993:948-949) Recognising the overall importance of “study” within the field could also imply the understanding that any organisation wishing to develop spirituality praxis would have to consider the need for study within their context in order to be able to embrace an authentic, informed and sound theory of spirituality.

Our extensive literature review remained essential, particularly since spirituality remains a new academic discipline, so that we could be satisfied with the theory which we were developing even as it continued to be informed by our on-going and developing practice.

According to Schneiders, over the past three decades several features of Theological scholarship have been revised due to the emergence and effect of women in the field, both as practitioners and as sources of data. Therefore in order to adequately understand these changes and to increase our learning, so we could apply our understanding, it has been important to incorporate these recent theological developments as she explains them. The changes are grouped under four categories of:

- 1) the other,
- 2) social location,
- 3) interdisciplinarity and
- 4) the emergence of spirituality.

Along with these four shifts and transformations within the approach to scholarship, the influence of feminism has been an imaginative shock of major proportions precipitating, impacting and fostering significant changes in the intellectual life of the first world and its institutional framework, due to the emergence of real women into the spheres of scholarship and the arenas of body and spirit, which are in massive imaginative



reorganisation with accompanying development of feminist theory to undergird that practice. However, as the "... human enterprise gradually comes to be seen as two-sex experience, values such as recognition of the other, equality, mutuality, relationality, interdependence, and cooperation are beginning to appear as not only 'women's strange ways of being' but as human ways of being that may be preferable to imperialism, domination, rugged individualism and competition." These features are very relevant and important to understand in the context of our mission and vision for Holton Lee, in terms of empowering oppressed and marginalized minorities. They also offer significant underpinning and support both our research approach and theoretical findings. A brief summary of her explanation of the four categories is included below.

- 1) "*The other*" includes any people different from the "norm" in Classical, Western philosophy and theology, that is, of the white, Western male and Christian, which thus has excluded women, people of colour, the poor, homosexuals and we would now include "disabled people" However, the arrogance and imperialism of submitting everyone into this paradigm was invisible to those involved even while the identity of the oppressed was obliterated. Furthermore they lacked resources to question it either theoretically or politically, however, some women have recently acquired intellectual and academic tools to question this status quo and so have begun to bridge the gap between experience and analysis, able to articulate and analyse the experience of oppression and exclusion by using the "master's tools" both academic and political to begin dismantling the palace of patriarchy. Thereby they have fundamentally changed the approach of scholarship by taking into account the fact that human reality is irreducibly plural and not merely hierarchically dualistic.
- 2) The related change in the overall approach to scholarship is "*social location*" as a determining condition of all knowing, thus battling against Enlightenment's "objectivity" and the claim of patriarchal scholarship. Instead we are moving to a universal, unbiased and politically neutral pursuit of the truth and production of knowledge. Feminist scholars insist that there is no such thing as nonsituated inquiry or presuppositionless knowledge since "where one stands determines what one sees." All scholarship and inquiry is political and not value free or neutral but has an agenda because someone profits from what is studied, the way knowledge is articulated, how it is made accessible or restricted and how it is used in society. Feminists and other liberationist scholars have helped force all scholars out of the closets of pseudo-objectivity and into the political marketplace, by acknowledging their feminist agenda as the pursuit of a truth that liberates feminists and other oppressed people. Therefore there has been a subtle but swift and profound change of style in the academy, for instance, moving away from the imperialist "we" which suggests disembodied omniscience about "subjects". Instead authors feel obligated to state explicitly who they are, where they come from and what effect location has on their work. A more substantive change is the inclusion of women or people of colour on research teams and faculties; publishers also insist on using inclusive language. Schneiders believes that increased inclusiveness is an evident necessity for valid research.
- 3) *Interdisciplinarity* is increasingly important, with the breakdown of hermetically sealed boundaries of self-contained and self-referential domains. Now liberation and feminist scholarship insists that all subject matter is studied from a feminist perspective which fosters movement across disciplinary lines, thus re-visioning theology from the standpoint of feminism. The emerging shape of contemporary scholarship is a reversal of the male and patriarchal Enlightenment idea of scholarship because analysis for its own sake is giving way to synthesis in the

service of social change. The rigid delineation of academic turf and its exclusivity to the uninitiated, maintained by unintelligible jargon, is giving way to the use of ordinary language.

- 4) *The emergence of spirituality* as a legitimate academic discipline studies the experiential interaction between humans and the divine in a cross-cultural, interreligious and sometimes nonreligious research discipline, which either operates under its own name or through a variety of subterfuges in university settings. It has also begun to be evoked as a dimension of the preparation of business executives, doctors, lawyers, educators and scientists. "Spirit" is understood as the capacity of the human to transcend nature and create history through the exploits of the intellectual and religious power inherent in humanity and so feminist scholarship has identified reappropriation of "spirit" as their primary objective recognising that "accession to full human stature meant accession to spirit."

Increasingly, the motivation for research is the desire to respond to real-life questions such as the search for meaning and this shift is due to the fact that previously marginalized and excluded people now bring their agenda to the academy, which demands a whole new approach to knowledge, asking where it comes from, how it is established, who generates it and what it is for. Thus interdisciplinarity can respond to these concerns more adequately than intellectual inbreeding of the classical academic specialisations. Schneiders reminds us that it is difficult not to cocoon ourselves as we try to sustain the hope we need in order to marshal the renewed energy needed to help us to stay on course towards a future in which right relations among all beings and first of all human beings can be achieved. The enormity of human crisis all over the world, the sheer speed of life and the glut of fragmented information along with the vastness and unmanageability of the material universe all come crashing in on us making the idea of constructive engagement with our 21<sup>st</sup> century world seem totally beyond our capacities. Therefore it will only be the truly wise who have single minded commitment, who are steadfast in hope, who do what little lies in their power, co-operating with the great work of the Spirit of God. (Schneiders, 2000: 42-51, 123-124)

Schneiders' perspective offered us invaluable theoretical underpinnings appropriately in line with our founding vision, which, as stated, is one of integration with the whole of life in mutual and equal relationships with all people and the environment. In that sense, we could refer to our "developing" spirituality at "holistic" that is, including the whole of life, both personal and social. Our motivation for research was to respond to our real-life question and situation especially with our mission statement for "...empowering and resourcing people, particularly carers and disabled people through creativity, environmental awareness, personal growth and spirituality." To include marginalized and socially excluded people requires and demands a whole new approach to knowledge along with some trust that we could make some contribution, even from our First World context to the enormity of the human crisis all over the world. The theory above indicates that a paradigm shift is required. "Concrete loving", living spirituality, a quality of life, as a way of life, the good life, with good practice and accountability to love, is not a quick fix. It does attempt to meet needs and problems addressing underlying causes, which is the type of spirituality we are attempting to live out and embody at Holton Lee. These discussions and perspectives also relate to the initial overview of spirituality in Chapter Two.

Theologian Elizabeth Dryer also states that the spiritual revolution we are in is very complex and global in nature, having begun as a popular phenomenon; it is now working its way into the "halls of the academy". She points out that at one end of the spectrum is "New Age" and the other is "fundamentalism". She notes many spiritual tensions in religion in what is now its very public stage, which include politics, the arts, literature,

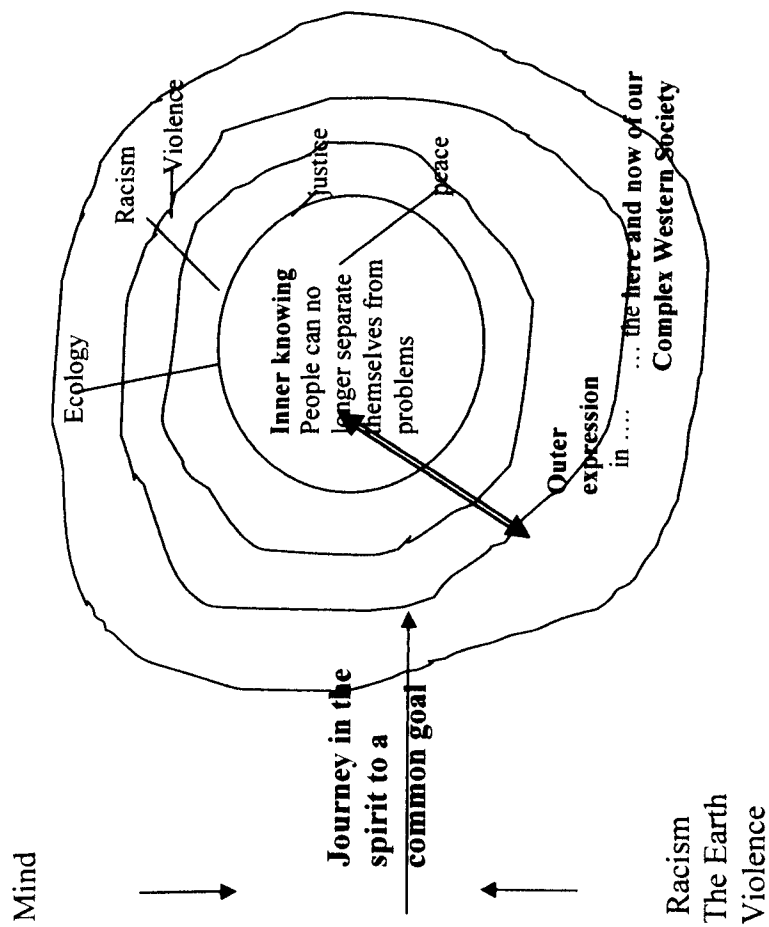
medicine, activities of religious leaders, inter-ecclesial debates, spirituality in the corporate world and moral issues. Economic factors reveal that “spirituality” in North America is a multi-million dollar enterprise. She believes that the relationship between science and spirituality, spirituality and cosmic ecological awareness will continue to be worked out in various public forums. Religious issues and spiritual experience must take into account this more public role. She also pointed out that spirituality will have to ask how all the tools for self-awareness which we now have which offer an interior awareness can be wedded to the rich contemplative traditions we have. The split between religion and spirituality has occurred because mainline religion has failed to address the needs and desires of the “seeking” community as well as the explosion of possibilities outside of the traditional church. She believes we need to respond to the challenges and deep hungers behind the many communal dimensions of spirituality and its various practices. Future spiritualities will have to take account of a pluralism so we can grow in knowledge about spiritual paths which include diverse and genuine paths to the divine-human connection. She wonders how practitioners of particular spiritualities can use their own distinctive gifts to work with others in committed, integral and non-violent ways to oppose ignorance and hate which divides us – racism, classism, ageism and homophobia. She suggests that “creative education” aimed at the critical, intelligent, persuasive and meaningful appropriation of the Christian spiritual tradition is primary with texts, contexts, practices, models, spirit, values and commitments. Such education also needs to take into account and respect and speak to the actual experiences and needs of the community, with humility, aware of its own limits in its place in the much broader post-modern world with post-Christian spiritual options. She believes the gifts of women will feature prominently in future spiritualities, with their neglected experience and perspectives around the globe which can have an impact on the ways we understand and practice the spiritual life, in re-shaping theological spirituality in terms of mutuality, compassion and bodiliness. The wisdom of the spiritual traditions needs to continually be sifted out and offered to communities in desperate need of enlightened guidance about what is truly humanising and divinising and what is not. The Spirit working through individuals and communities will sustain our hope and assist us to become communities of love to which others are drawn. (Dryer, 2000:377-380)

## GUIDELINES FOR EMBEDDING SPIRITUALITY IN ORGANISATIONS

In Chapter Six we considered the movement around the eight phases of the Model for understanding and developing spirituality praxis, learning what was implied in our process which offers a framework for understanding and developing spirituality. The cycle is on-going as life is, and movement continues towards growth, change and congruency. The additional guidelines proposed here for embedding spirituality in organisations are not formulas or techniques written in tablets of stone but are rather reflections and theoretical underpinnings in support of what we have experienced and learned, not only in our own research experience but from the voices of others who live spirituality. The guidelines provide theoretical underpinnings for “good practice”, indicating what “loving conduct” is, in personal, organisational, societal and global environments. Spirituality praxis and accountability cannot be separated and have to do with justice and peace, with connecting our inner and outer spirituality, so we can live an authentic spiritual life, with renewed hearts, not based on power “over” others, as we continue to make our home in our complex society. See in diagram 18 below, *“Connecting Inner and Outer Spirituality in Our Spiritual Search and Journey”*

# CONNECTING INNER AND OUTER SPIRITUALITY IN OUR SPIRITUAL SEARCH AND JOURNEY

Diagram 18



These problems can only be solved at the level of Spirit not of the mind. The goal of each religion is the same so we can join hands in this journey toward a common goal and so experience unity in diversity. A challenge to the institutional religions. (Johnston, 2000:84)

- We must integrate our inner knowing and outer expression and find ways to live the spiritual journey fully. Spiritual fulfillment and freedom includes compassion and is born in patience and love which grows through the wisdom of the larger community; it is not born of oneself.
- The authentic spiritual life must be fulfilled here and now in the place we live, as we continue to mature in the cycles of the spiritual life on our inner spiritual journey.
- As we look into the mind and heart we discover they hold and encompass our whole world and vast regions of consciousness.
- The few who claim spiritual perfection have often created the most power-centred and destructive communities.
- It is not enough to recognise spiritual longing but our hearts need to be renewed so we need a trustworthy discipline to carry us on the journey not to “fix” ourselves, but in order to see who we really are.

(Kornfield, 2000)

The description below is the complete version.

1. Continuing research and study
2. Good teachers for the journey
3. Use of words and language
4. Organisational systems
5. Spiritual rhythm, disciplines and spiritual practice
6. Accountability
7. Common Global Vision
8. Guidelines for practising a transformational spirituality
9. Diversity, discrimination and equal opportunity
10. A new vision for life – genuine and revolutionary mysticism and community
11. Spirituality applied and practiced – orthopraxis in the face of globalisation
12. Genuine change – Evolutionary spirituality
13. Living spirituality in practice
14. On-going discernment process
15. A framework for spirituality of organisational renewal and suggestions on how to maintain on-going good practice
16. The Pastoral Cycle
17. On-going Spiritual development and fruits

### **1. Continuing research and study**

It is important to recognise the overall importance of “study” within the field of spirituality, particularly since loving conduct is concrete because it includes both meeting needs or problems and also addressing the causes of these needs and problems if they are to be eliminated. For this the study of issues and systems is essential in order to be able to convey at least basic understanding to others, otherwise the practice risks shallowness or even counter productiveness. The interview data reflect the fact that we grew in our cognitive understanding of spirituality as well as our own spiritual praxis, both at personal and organisational levels. (Noffke, 1993:948-949) Also as Clarkson points out rigorous and constant research should not just be a one-off study but should instead be conducted for as long as the professional is working in their field of practice. (Clarkson, web page – What is Learning by Inquiry) As Tosey pointed out, research in this field should examine ways in which experiences and definitions are being shaped within businesses and organisational contexts. His caution is that people can be caught up in their own enthusiasm about spirituality and soul without making connections in their own experience. He also raised questions about credentials needed for those engaging in spirituality particularly because of the way it is being psychologised and secularised especially within the business domain. (Tosey, web page)

The subject for our theology is the human as a relational, planetary and cosmic creature and our connection with the universe or our home planet Earth. Traditional methods of research in science are proving, not merely inadequate but dissatisfying. We can't come to grips with the patriarchal modelling of the past and we therefore need wisdom and discernment to keep focused on the mystery, of which God is the source and foundation. It is no longer appropriate for theologians to invoke an older type of scholarly integrity striving to analyse the emerging world objectively from the scholarly gaze of a university, seminary or theological college. No one is excluded in this search or adventure, nor does anybody have a right to exclude another in the name of religion, race or ethnicity. Instead, the pastoral ambience provides raw material for a theology that speaks meaningfully to the hungry masses of our time because the search for truth cannot be hemmed in or pinned down. Therefore the theologian is accountable to the “human community at large” and



beyond them to the creative energy of life itself in the creative pursuit of ultimate meaning. (O'Murchu, 2000)

In our Action Research we reflected-on-learning, with a knowing-in-action and we reflected-in-action, so that there was a coming-into-being of our understanding and knowing. Thus we were able to perceive with less distortion, since our conscious context and physical context each had their own validity and determined each other in dialogue, because neither purely resides in the thing observed but stood as genuine acts of participation between the two. In this way subjective experience and reality are linked and research and subsequent interpretation happen in a creative process because "...creativity is where part of the external world and self are linked together in a common process of coming-into-being." (Clarke, 1996:147-150) Thus the scientific search and the religious search have much in common subjectively and can complement one another, even though objectively they are quite different. Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan, also believed that prior to objective statements there must be subjective reality; an experience of conversion, which may take place in a moment or through a slow maturing process of a life time. Conversion is the experience by which one becomes an authentic human being, which is the basis of all religion, which coincides with all living religions, since the first step is to be authentically human. Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, agnostics and atheists of good will are all engaged in a common search for truth and for a solution to the awful problems that confront us all. True light enlightens everyone; the Spirit of God is at work in the whole universe. (Johnston 2000: 35,39)

## **2. Good teachers for the journey**

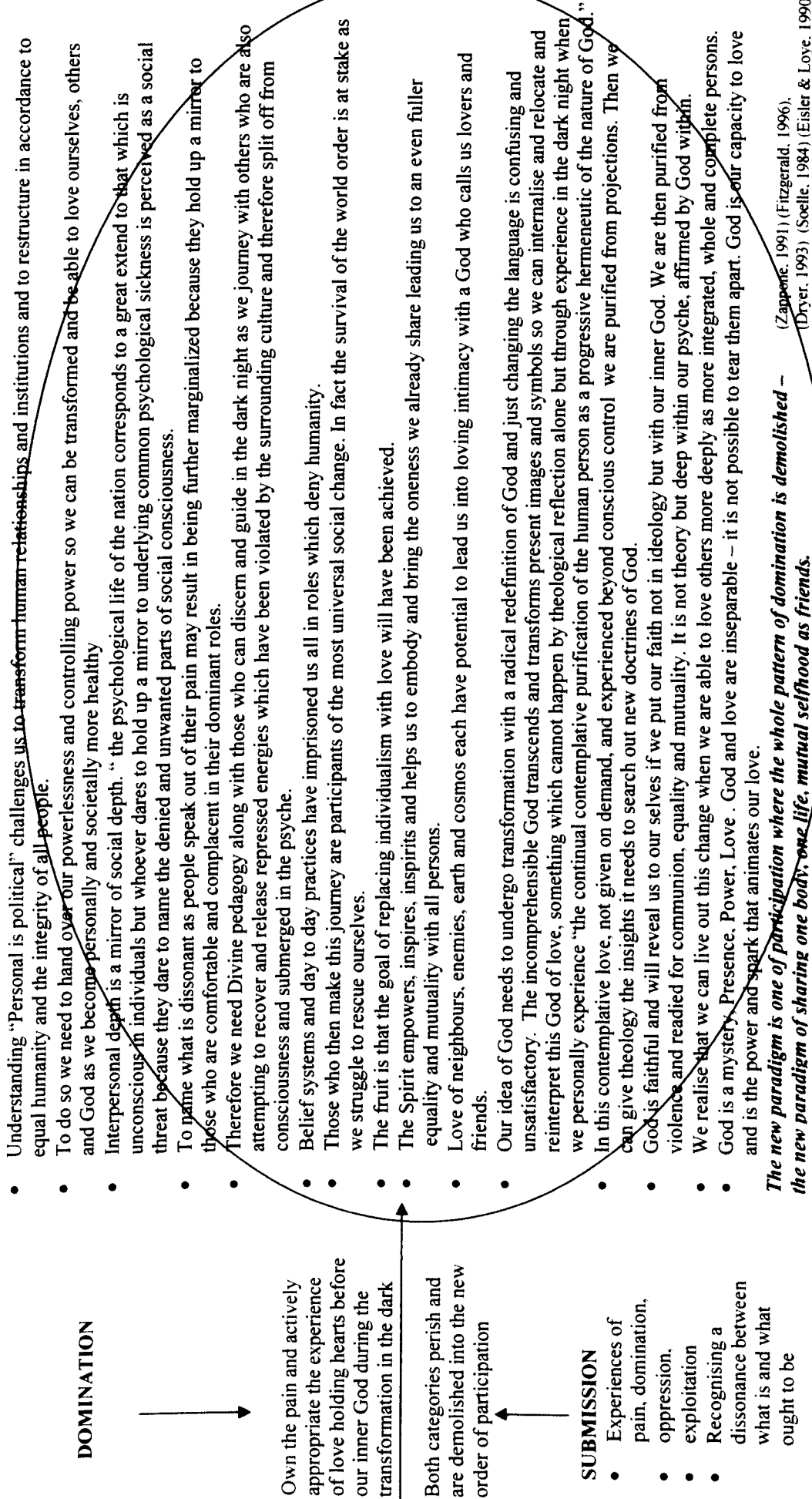
They are those people who can speak from their own intrinsic authority. "Good teachers" create the kind of theological living-space we need for our search for meaning and so are worth searching for, precisely because they preach from their own intrinsic authority, from their own pain and passion for truth. "These are the kinds of guides who make the journey with their listeners rather than insisting that they have already arrived at the destination." Therefore it is important for us to abandon theological defensiveness and allow people to bring their questions into the sanctuary without insisting on their acceptance of pre-packed answers. We should instead "recognise that the process of doubt and anger are part of the mystery of the spiritual life and have to be included in God". (Holloway, 1997)

There is also a paradoxical nature to spiritual growth because although we are to bring all of our knowledge and skill to the task, in fact, it is the Spirit who effects growth and shapes the soul, a spirit who blows where it will, much to the surprise of our best-made plans. "This does not relieve us of our responsibility to further our expertise but reminds us that the Spirit ultimately produces the growth we hope to facilitate. (Au, 1995:47) The survival of the world order is at stake as we all struggle to rescue ourselves. Our understanding is that "personal is political" and challenges us to transform human relationships and institutions. We also need Divine pedagogy or teaching as well as those who can help discern and guide us in the dark as we journey. The fruit of such growth is that love replaces individualism and then we are able live in mutual participation with all persons, the earth, cosmos and God. The Diagram on the next page *"Attributes of the Journey"* outlines what is involved in such a change.

We will all know by our resultant behaviour if we have changed and shifted during our journey, when we are able to live an "integrating spirituality" which enables us to create new politics and generate new social structures which helps to restore the whole fabric of life. We will also know because there will be a resulting congruence between our inner and outer ethic and behaviour. Our love will be connected to justice with a mode of action and a focus of bringing one another to life through acts of love and we will be living in a new "paradigm of power" through webs and networks. Such a psychological revolution and

## ATTRIBUTES OF THE JOURNEY

Diagram 19



breakthrough in human consciousness enables us to choose the mutual “empowerment” of love “with” others. (Ruffing, 1993: 753-756)

### **3. Use of words and language**

Refer to the discussion in Chapter Four page 33 and in Chapter Six page 147.

### **4. Organisational systems**

Bishop Holloway states that feuds are focused on organisational systems competing for exclusive divine approval which makes Christianity one of the most contentious religions in history. The main opportunities of the public and political aspects of our lives are provided by the people we live and work with and encounter in our normal lives. The “poor” require more than alms and “people of power” devise theories to keep it so we must be committed to justice, advocacy and solidarity with those who live on the margins. This may then include confrontation of systems and powerful institutions rather than collude with those who oppress others, whether in the spiritual (church) or political (State), when they organise themselves against the “weak”. We can be turned into bigots and persecutors against those whose freedom challenges our anxieties because we have a fear of change and of “the other.” Therefore we need some sort of spiritual rhythm in our lives particularly since the goal of formation and object of spiritual disciplines is of compassion and loving-kindness. (Holloway, 1997) In the past twenty years of the twentieth century business has come to lead human endeavour but in the process lost the human soul, since the arts, medicine, education, and the sciences can all be subordinated to the whims of corporate mission statements and marketing strategies. (Dollard, 2002) Also, as was made clear in Chapter Six, we can learn much from wider literature on organisations (e.g. Wenger, Handy, Coghlan and Critten etc)

### **5. Spiritual rhythm, disciplines and practice**

Ravindra tells us that our practice must be in freedom from the ego through love, compassion, respect and truth; the effort to transform ourselves spiritually makes us genuine religious action practitioners. Spiritual disciplines are all concerned with integration and wholeness and above all with the integration of Truth and Love. “If our truth is not revealed in love, then it is false and if our love does not flow from the truth, then it is not lasting”. Spiritual truth is always a matter of direct perception and an experience of God who is a Unique Person. God is a matter of experience not an inference from a philosophical proposition or scientific hypothesis. Even though experimentation, reasoned scientific theorizing, philosophic abstractions and direct spiritual super-sensuous perceptions can reside in the same person never the less, it is in the soul of the whole person a reconciliation needs to take place so that there can be purposive action without self-centredness, individuality without egoism, and oneness with the all without loss of uniqueness. (Ravindra, 2000) (Ravi Ravindra is a Hindu and Professor of Comparative Religion and Physics)

The Dali Lama has written that the key to bring about harmony necessary to overcome inter-religious conflict is understanding and the most significant obstruction is ignorance. In our increasingly complex and interdependent world we are now compelled to acknowledge the existence of other cultures, ethnic groups and religious faiths, whether we like it or not. Ignorance is overcome through dialogue among scholars and ordinary practiced followers of different religions, noted in the example given by the founders of all major religions since each conducted themselves with great simplicity, ethical discipline and love for all as the hallmark of their lives. Their teachings all place special emphasis on developing love and compassion and renouncing selfish desires, calling on us to transform our hearts and minds. He emphasises that it is essential to realise that any religious practice entails a lot more than merely saying, “I believe” as fervent believers or visiting temples, shrines or churches and taking religious teachings, is of little benefit and avails us of

nothing if they do not enter the heart but remain at the level of intellect alone. Simply relying on faith without implementation is of limited value, rather the efforts that we make sincerely to transform ourselves spiritually are what make us genuine religious practitioners; until we put our own spiritual teachings into practice we will never be taken seriously. We don't need complicated dogmas but rather the doctrine is compassion, love and respect acting out of concern for others and as we do this step by step, we will gradually reorder our habits and attitudes and think more of others. (Tenzin Gyatso, The Dali Lama 1999: 228-246)

David Steindl-Rast reminds us that, "By spiritual we mean, of course, fully alive, since spirit means life breath. The spirit is the life breath of God within us. If you are fully alive, alert, and responsive to the challenge of every moment then you are living a spiritual life." (Steindl-Rast, 1996:77) Templeton also emphasises that religious leaders through the ages have defined religion largely in terms of love and so teach and assume the priority of love in religious practice. Its meaning cannot be fully captured within the limitations of language but is "... more accurately measured in action – in good will, kindness, forgiveness and compassion toward others" and it is directed toward all of humanity and all of creation and is unconditional and altruistic. (Templeton, 1999:2-4,51) Such, "Loving" does not come from human effort alone. It cannot be programmed ... it is essentially a religious phenomenon. Indeed, it is the very core and centre of all authentic religion." "... for the mystics God, who is Love, is the mystery of mysteries, the Source of all existence, the Being who cannot be encapsulated in words, or letters or images." The mysticism of today is for the millions of people who are searching and the mystic of today can no longer separate himself or herself from our harrowing problems of peace, justice, ecology, violence and racism. "Indeed, we now know that these problems can never be solved at the level of the mind but only at the level of spirit." (Johnston, 2000:17,83)

## **6. Accountability**

In fact, the ultimate goal is not to remove the burden from the oppressed but to change the very hearts and minds of the oppressor and this represents unlimited, unconditional love. (Templeton, 1999) O'Murchu explains that our accountability to the world, which is battered and bruised by forces of patriarchy, happens when we are attuned to movements of the Spirit at work in the world with priority of a relational and co-operative mode rather than a competitive one. Everything in our universe is interconnected and inter-related, so we need a real desire to connect widely and deeply, which requires a committed effort to engage with the whole of reality. Thus, "A theologian with final answers is more likely to be promoting ideology rather than theology." Our accountability is, in fact, to the whole creative process, with a discernment that requires the wisdom and attention of many disciplines because the wisdom of God can never be relegated exclusively to a "spiritualised" realm called Church or religion. Such a dualistic construction of "sacred and secular" is an invention of an age of religion which we now need to discard because the new spiritual ferment is struggling to unfold in the lives of people who encounter God on the fringes of creative thresholds as they move in a spiritual space which seeks to transcend the narrow and ideological confines of the religion of power and the religion of fear. (O'Murchu, 2000: 219-230) According to Soelle such "accountability" would also include the weak being able to move from impotence to power. This is more important than any other transition, because they are able to move then from an unconscious, unsuspecting tolerated impotence, with practical existential steps, which then include confronting their life-threatening power. (Soelle 2001:205)

## **7. Common Global Vision: Transformation of society, culture and consciousness**

"Globalisation is premised on the promise that the poor may become a little less poor if only the rich become immeasurably, abusively richer: if it had been the intention of humanity to wreck the Earth, no more effective formula could have been imagined"

Therefore there is a need to distribute justice and allocate resources. (Seabrook, 2002) The implications of increased spiritual awareness, embracing values such as empowerment, participation, inclusiveness and sustainable development, within our environment has social, political and financial consequences. (O'Murchu, 2000)

### **8. Guidelines for practising a transformational spirituality**

The transformations of society, culture and consciousness have deep repercussions on the role of religion and spirituality; in fact, a rightly understood and practised spirituality might give direction and meaning to these transformations. Theologian King asks what "spiritual resources" the world faiths possess, so they can respond to the great global threats of poverty, war and ecological disaster. She suggests that each faith community examine its own spiritual resources in order to develop a new kind of "global spirituality". Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote in 1937 about the "phenomenon of spirituality", believing then that spirituality provides the deepest energy resources for human action and community, for building the spirit of one earth, a "new mysticism" or a "mysticism of action" as a new holistic spirituality, which works in and through all human realities, rather than apart from them. He was searching for a *transformational spirituality* commensurate with a cosmos, which itself is in spiritual transformation, wherein personal, social and global developments are not seen as apart, but as closely interdependent. Whilst others tend to stress a personal, individualistic approach to inner development and transformation of self, Teilhard had a grasp of the dynamic interconnections between spiritual development of the individual person, of small groups and communities and of global society. His understanding of spirituality as "transformative spirit in action" provides a new paradigm for the practice of spirituality in contemporary culture. It has come out of the cloister, out of religious institutions, into the world at large. The search for new forms of spirituality which integrate action and contemplation, social and personal worlds, outward and inward is a search which one also finds articulated elsewhere, for instance, within womens' spirituality, ecology, peace or artistic movements. King believes that we need a common vision of what we want the world to be so that we can shape it and arrive at a greater equity and balance between spiritual and material needs. Seeking spiritual formation and following a spiritual discipline is necessary, but not sufficient for the spirituality of the future. Whilst theology must be rooted in spiritual commitment and orientated towards transformational praxis to remain meaningful, spirituality must permeate the personal and political, it must animate our thought, action and imagination so that we can work for the transformation of the whole world and all life within it. It cannot remain the privilege of a few and if it did it would become sterile and irrelevant, so there is an urgent need to work for a broader development of spiritual awareness and sensibility among all peoples. To be attentive to the call of the spirit in contemporary culture requires a creative, dynamic response; only a transformed action-orientated spirituality can respond to the hope and agonies of our suffering world. (King, 1992:18-20)

### **9. Diversity and discrimination and equal opportunity**

Diversity is a means of combating discrimination, imbalance, injustice, under-representation or exclusion where underlying reasons are addressed and tackled so that discriminatory barriers are got rid of. However it is in danger of being exploited as a strategy with the "popular perception" which results in it being tokenism, faddish and pragmatic and therefore cannot result in actual change with an accompanying drive towards equality. Because Holton Lee's vision embraces and emphasises the principles of inclusion and equal opportunity as a way of life and spirituality praxis we have had to deal with all that is implied in our choice, which is to combat discrimination, injustice, misunderstandings, which then takes us into the socio-political as well as the spiritual realms. This has implied continual learning, awareness raising, change and transformation, both individually and as an organisation since we can easily collude with the "norm" out of ignorance. Younge believes that, actually it is not a matter of a drive towards "equality"

but rather the need is to replace it altogether. If we don't tackle the underlying reasons, the suggestion is that "... an institution need not fundamentally change the way it functions so long as it changes the way it looks." Therefore the underlying issues and reasons for injustice need to change which can only happen as we are willing to face these injustices head on and learn from them. We have found that a safeguard is that those who visit Holton Lee quickly reflect back to us any discrepancies or whether they experience any sort of discrimination; therefore we can't just say one thing and live out another. We have had to learn instead that to live out what we say about equality means just that, as Younge points out, it means making a difference by allowing people to be who they are, within an environment that encourages growth and fulfilment of potential. He believes then that in so doing we radically alter the "institution" that previously excluded people who felt marginalized, which is what we have done, to some degree, through this research process by gaining more understanding for our practice or orthopraxis. (Younge, 2002)

#### 10. A New Vision for life –genuine and revolutionary mysticism and community

"Mysticism and community exist in complex tension with one another." We have been considering spirituality within the people, the organisation, the structure and ethos. But a question emerges and remains if we also broaden our understanding to include our "global home" with all its various crises which have been brought about by all of us as we seek to fulfil our desire for "something more". (Soelle, 2001) For example, at the World Summit in 2002, many businesses and corporations indicated that there weren't willing to address the gap between the rich and poor so therefore there remains a question of ethics, basic human rights and the environment. (World Summit web site, 2001) Brown tells us that "there is a stark choice between providing the opportunity for the poor to develop or continuing to let the rich get richer as the expense of the poor." (Brown, 2002) However, Soelle states that "genuine mysticism" is understood as revolutionary mysticism which goes beyond spiritual egoism and instead goes out into the ongoing creation of the world in which we participate. "Being-in-God" cannot be privately appropriated and enshrined into the purely "personal" happening; isolating the individual is intolerable to mystical thinking. Mystics understand instead that when consciousness expands, knowledge deepens and one's being changes. She believes that humans who have no thought of God have fallen asleep and live in a prison which is determined by two trends that match perfectly, that is:

- globalisation and
- individualisation

We live in a standardized, **globalised** economic order of technocracy that demands total disposition over space, time and creation. We are coerced to produce more at more speed and profit for about twenty percent of humankind. With this super-engine human beings are alienated, addicted and dependent. One of the "spiritual difficulties" is the inner connection between globalisation and individualization because the more globally the market economy structures itself, the less interest it demonstrates in the social and ecological webs in which humans live and the more it requires the individual who is without any relation whatsoever. The global market needs people fit for business who have no concern for landmines or water sources, within the religion of consumerism. Within such globalisation the corporate world dominance collaborates relenting **individualisation** which has no attachment to our fellow creatures and so seems beyond hope. (Soelle: 2001:157-159, 191-194) George Monbiot explains this current difficulty and inconsistency saying that some companies associated with "corporate social responsibility" seem to be saying one thing and doing just the opposite. He believes that corporations will take what they can because when there is a conflict between profitability and the environment and human rights, the profits come first. Voluntary agreements simply do not work because big business will protect human rights and the environment only when it is forced to do so. (Monbiot, 2002:19)



Soelle points out that we need a “*new vision of our life together*”, one which nourishes resistance, with groups made up of those who know the God in “dark night” and can thus offer hope. Such groups who are committed to voluntary effort, critical openness and taking their own initiative can be bearers of hope. Politically speaking, non-governmental organisations, from a spiritual perspective can be carriers of resistance because they embody a different interest than consumerism. God is a movement, something flowering, growing and driving, as a process. “When we engage ourselves in the process we become part of the God-movement and are connected with all others.” (Soelle: 2001:157-159, 191-194) The challenge then to all businesses must be one of ethics, basic human and environmental rights and “good practice”, with corporate accountability and social and environmental responsibility.

### **11. Spirituality applied and practised - orthopraxis in the face of globalisation and repression**

Soelle states that in Liberation Theology, liberation (redemption) is what sets us free from economic, political, cultural and spiritual oppression. Liberating movements express themselves in numerous changes in the practice and teaching of religion. Four principles are that:

- 1.) Orthopraxis is a situation where the majority are disenfranchised; truth is dependent on the struggle for liberation, replacing the hierarchical order which places spiritual life above practical-active life.
- 2.) Recognition that the poor are teachers because they pose the questions therefore new space is created for them academically
- 3.) Uncovering the causes and reconciliation, reconstitution and rediscovery of the dignity of the destitute victims of history of the original religions of indigenous people.
- 4.) Standing up for justice, human rights and land distribution

In liberating movements the mystical eye sees God at work, seeing, hearing and acting even in forms that are utterly secular and expresses itself in numerous changes in the practice and teaching of religion. The perspective of the poor is God’s perspective. (Soelle 2001)

Bede Griffiths also believed that symptoms of our current disease results from a mechanistic view of the universe where we seek to control the world and nature with resulting threat of planetary destruction but a new state of consciousness and relationship with our redeemed humanity will emerge out of a new consciousness. The ancient world vision understood life as an integrated whole of three worlds of physical, psychological and spiritual, interrelated and integrated to form a unity. Now as humanity emerges into a new state of consciousness with a higher knowledge of direct experience of the indwelling Spirit of God, it can bring about transformation where dualities are transcended. Humanity can then be at peace in the whole cosmic order to which it belongs. Modern physics tells us the whole material universe is a vast “field of energies” which are in a continuous process of transformation and that the whole universe has to undergo a radical transformation. As “consciousness” develops then our whole bodily structure is integrated with the mind and so forms a psycho-physical organism. In this way, we go beyond our rational consciousness and learn how to integrate our rational mind and ego-consciousness into our personal being, thus becoming more of ourselves, able to enter more deeply into relationships with others, in a communion of love. We emerge through all the levels of consciousness, the physical, vital, emotional, imaginative, rational, and transrational until we reach a fully differentiated unity of inter-personal relationship which recalls the description of the universe in what modern physics refers to as a “complicated web of interdependent relationships.” (Griffiths, 1998: 78- 95) A psychological revolution is required so that we can all develop a humanely empowering vision because inauthentic

distortions in relationships have an unequal distribution of power, which is not overcome, with a reversal of power and further polarisation. (King, 1995)

Soelle believes then that we need a theology which holds on to the dignity and human rights of the destitute even in the face of the globalisation of the markets which has destroyed every form of their subsistence economy. Such a "Mysticism of liberation" makes no distinction between movements associated with churches and secular movements. The church also becomes more itself when it loses power, both "economic power" and also "protective power" for those who live out the liberating faith. She tells us that critical thinkers in the natural sciences have a new attentiveness emerging, which is that of a domination-free mystical religiosity because, everything that exists coexists and is bound up into a network of relationships that we call interdependence. Creation is dependent on cooperation and mutual assistance. Commonality and mutual dependency are the basis of evolution; therefore we need a "mystical-ecological consciousness" which knows itself to be woven together with all that exists. All that is can live and survive only in the coexistence of relationships and this coexistence binds us together with the millions of years of evolution and at the same time with our grandchildren's drinking water and it needs a different world piety because love overcomes illusions of autonomy, self-sufficiency and the praxis of exclusion. Living in this mystical dream is already the hope of self-aware minorities. Buber knew that no symbol is adequate for God yet perhaps the life between one human being and another can now become a symbol for God but he also saw that a bigger mystical task is to remain in the world and yet to resist, within the world, the urge to possess both things and power. "True democratic mysticism" of everyday life is where individuals take responsibility for the part of the world entrusted to them, which requires us to resist the urge to possess both things and power. As Soelle suggests, "God in us" leads to concern where everything that insults the sense of inequality and justice is addressed and suggests that a "Mystical understanding of community" presupposes a different sort of globalisation in which it is not only war that is repudiated but that the causes of war in ourselves are also opposed. (Soelle, 2001: 283-298, 173) At Holton Lee we work to address underlying causes particularly of oppression of disabled people and to be mutually inclusive of all people recognising we are not autonomous or self-sufficient but rather we realise our inter-dependency.

## **12. Genuine change - Evolutionary spirituality ...**

happens when we are thrown into a process of genuine change and transformation, often through feeling powerless, having to move from the old to the new paradigm at either personal, group, societal, national or international levels. An alternative vision is not given on demand but is beyond our conscious processes. But such an impasse is the condition for transformation as we surrender to it. God does not communicate through discursive analysis; we are in a forced passage from rational analytical linear thinking to intuitive, metaphorical and symbolic consciousness. Thus a creative re-visioning of our world is possible through bringing the impasse to prayer, a death and dying in order to see how to be and to act on behalf of God in the world. The contemplative love experience is not concerned for the image of God, as political theologians are, but with God who does in the end transcend our images and expectations. What is critical is to see that one has to allow the experience to take place through a love that is gradually welling up from the ground of one's being and that serves as a basis for our contemplation. This experience can give to theology the insights it needs to search out a new doctrine of God which is related to the intellectual, practical and ethical concerns of the present situation of all oppressed groups which suggests transformation or emancipative possibilities for the future. Such contemplation and liberation demand the handing over of one's powerlessness and "outsider-ness" to the inspiration and power of God's Spirit. This is not a mute God who silences human desire, instead people need to realise that the experience of anger, rage, depression and abandonment is a constitutive part of the transformation and purification of

the dark night. This very rage and anger purify the “abused consciousness”, of all the repressed possibilities and “lost alternatives” which cry within for a voice, thus putting all the power of desire, not in ideology, but before the inner God and purified of violence they are readied for communion with their God and for equality, liberation and mutuality. Such an impasse internalises the option for the poor and effects an identification with and compassion for all those whose cry for liberation is so basic that it shouts out for all of us in our common quest for equality. This is an experience not a theory. In the dark night the person is affirmed by the God within, not a validation of things as they are or a ploy to keep people contented as “outcasts of the [patriarchal] land.” Rather there is an affirmation of the self that comes from deep inside and the consequent maturing to wholeness as a complete person along with a new and “integrating spirituality” capable of creating new bodies and generating new social structures. (Fitzgerald, 1996:410-429)

At the beginning of this Report I referred to the article in The Times about Rowan Williams book about the mystic Teresa of Avila. He stated that, “God is within but at the centre: the journey inward is a journey to the place where God’s love meets and mingles with the life of the soul” We need to find the room of self-knowledge and “orient” ourselves from there because, “... the soul’s knowledge is not simply a gathering of information but it’s self-awareness must be organised around the awareness of it’s true relation to God: it must acquire self-knowledge understood as humility and repentance.” We know ourselves by looking at God. To be “good” without humility is to be condemned to a really wretched life where we are weighed down and prisoners of ourselves because we are committed to the strenuous job of constant repression, projecting our own fears and uncertainties onto others and showing aggressive zeal for their improvement. But we are also given strength for our long journey as we recognise that we are still on the near side of the great chasm between effort and grace. (Williams, 2002)

### 13. Living spirituality in practice

Two of the co-researchers have said that they believe that “where God is love is”. According to Dubay sometimes it can seem terrifying for us to walk the talk and few of us realise the degree of our inner poverty because we tend to equate our holy thoughts, aspirations and our ability to discuss religious and moral questions with actual advancement in the spiritual life. “We little realise how far behind our noble protestations lags our actual performance ... we tend to be prompt and ready of speech, but slow and slovenly in action. Illusion is no friend of sanctity. To grow, therefore, we need progressively deeper insights into ourselves”. (Dubay, 2002)

What is love and how do we attain a quality of love? Anthony De Mello tells us that it arises in the human heart and yet “anything you do will only make it forced, cultivated and therefore phoney, for love cannot be forced. There is nothing you can do.” Freedom is another word for love. We can love when we stop discriminating, don’t ask for anything in return, are unselfconscious and love in freedom and love dies in the moment of coercion, control or conflict. Love means being sensitive to life, things, persons, to the exclusion of nothing, no one; this Love is already within us and only requires us to remove the blocks so it can surface. Love springs from awareness and really seeing “the other”, where we drop our prejudices, memories, projections and selective ways of looking at people and Love born of sensitivity doesn’t respond to prefabricated *guidelines* and principles but rather to concrete reality. It is terrifying because to love is to see but in the death of the ego is freedom, peace and joy; if we have an awareness of self and other we will know what love is. It is important to see ourselves, our emotions, needs, dishonesty and self-seeking as well as our tendency to control and manipulate. De Mello points out that we have to drop the control that the concepts, categories, prejudices, projections, needs, attachments and labels we have drawn from our conditioning and past experiences have over us. This includes dropping the control society exercises over us, with its tentacles, which have

penetrated to the very roots of our being, because they prevent us from loving. His understanding is that what will save the world is not goodwill but a change in our thinking; we need to unlearn with courage so we don't respond with prejudice to labels of race, religion, sect, sex, young or old, but to the reality of love. Otherwise, we respond instead to principles, ideologies and economic, political, religious and psychological belief-systems as well as to preconceived ideas and prejudices. Therefore we need to search for our biases, programmed perceptions and projections and separate them from the reality before us because our thinking is often contaminated by fear, desire and self-interest, consciously or unconsciously. We don't need doctrinal formulations, methods, techniques, spiritual exercises or formulas but hearts that divest of programming because spirituality isn't lived by a practice of techniques but by being a certain kind of person which is not achieved through efforts or techniques. It is not a commodity you can buy; what matters is what you are, what you become. De Mello, 1993:52-97

#### **14. On-going discernment process**

David Coghlan explains that *first person inquiry* and practice is done on one's own inquiry into the events of one's own daily life, with awareness and purpose. It has to do with how we are in the world, how our spiritual development occurs in the events of everyday life as we attend to experience, make judgements and take responsibility for actions taken. Reflection on experience, judgement and action take place within the context of a growing conversation to God's loving action in the world. *Second person inquiry/practice* addresses our ability to inquire with others into issues of mutual concern, through face-to-face dialogue and conversation. It involves engagement in a community of faith. In the group the individual shares, others listen and then the group attempts to draw together its sense of where God is leading the group. This group may find expression in a task-orientated team, working where the team's purpose, the means of achieving it, the maintenance of the team's process and the development of the individual can be viewed in terms of this discernment process. *Third person inquiry* then aims at creating communities of inquiry, involving people beyond the direct second person action. It is actualised then through dissemination, reporting or publishing. The quality of the third person practice which flows from the first and second person inquiry/practice can be in the progress of the planet and life within the context of inquiry as they attempt to contribute to the building up of communities of faith, trying to live a life of faith in a manner which promotes God's action in the world. They can articulate and disseminate this spirituality in educational pedagogy, organisational processes, and spiritual direction or in other fields, which engage in third person practice. (Coghlan, 2002)

Our research and discernment, undertaken in order to embed spirituality praxis, took place within an organisational context. Coghlan explains that Organisation development is a facilitative approach to development: it functions by helping members of organisations manage their own change by reflecting on their own experience and coming to their own judgement of what needs to change and how to go about it. It puts considerable emphasis on the work of teams and groups within the development of an organisation, since teams and groups have greater leverage in affecting change in organisations than have individuals. He suggests an emergent Ignatian framework based on the writings of Ignatius. He describes such a framework for teamwork process:

- 1) The first element is to understand the purpose and end. Team members would consider what they want, what they want to bring about in long, medium and short terms and what goals need to be set. Without this understanding confusion and conflict about why the groups exists can result.
- 2) The second element is to be clear about how all is to be done, how to achieve the purpose or end, who is going to do what, who is responsible for what, by when is it to be done and how will it be done.
- 3) The third element, in any cooperative venture is attention to the maintenance of the team, keeping its members together in order to perform the tasks assigned to it. The group process focuses on how the group achieves its tasks and fosters and maintains the quality of its group life. They ask how to proceed, how to structure meetings and listen to each other, how to structure listening to the Spirit, how to engage in discernment in common, how decisions will be made, what kind of communication is required, how disagreements and conflicts will be handled and what is expected of the leader.
- 4) The fourth element is activity to help the growth of the individual members of the group. They ask how to build on the experiences and gifts of the team's members and maintain relationships and work in such a way that all can help one another to grow in love in interpersonal relationships. Shared responsibility can create a bond among team members.

Within the teamwork process there are four different perspectives, that of:

1. *Leaders* who consider how much they invite members to define the purpose, decide what roles, priorities and tasks, how the group is working, how effective it is and how individuals can be helped to grow.
2. *Group members* ask what am I here for, what is expected of me, what is the group's atmosphere and way of working.
3. *Individuals* are aware of the challenges to their own way of thinking and working.
4. *Outcomes* of the group's work are an important perspective. Are the outcomes significant and what was desired? Do the means selected and implemented enable those purposes to be achieved? Is the group's way of being and working enabling the ends to be reached? And are the individual members contributing to the outcomes?

A *consultant* or facilitator suggests a fourth perspective if the group utilises a process consultant or facilitator. They then consider the purpose or end in terms of clarity and agreement. Does the group know what its purposes are and do they agree on the purpose or end. They ask how they select and implement the means, if the group works well. (Coghlan, 2001b:65-74)

The process outlined above does reflect our recent process but also gives us and others a useful and encouraging framework to continue to develop spirituality praxis with an approach which facilitates spiritual understanding and development.

### **15. A Framework for the spirituality of organisation renewal and suggestions on how to maintain on-going good practice**

As we now have discovered ourselves, it is one thing to have the research group as catalyst while we were on the research journey but then the understanding which emerged needs to be owned and lived. Our "Personal Growth & Spirituality Policy" will help to maintain on-going "good practice" as well as ultimately having a new full time worker, who will work according to the job description we have written as part of the research project. We will continue to try to live out a participatory life-style, based on our vision and mission as co-creators of the cosmos believing that all have a right to "flourish".

Coghlan believes that we need to develop a “spirituality of organisational renewal” and to have frameworks for understanding it in the same way that there are constructs for individual renewal and change. He outlines the “theory and practice” of such an organisational development, as an approach to change, which focuses on re-education and helping people to learn and make the changes. His thinking and theory, based on “discernment”, again underpins our action research experience and practice, giving additional clear frameworks. He emphasises that the “discernment process” is a re-educative process, involving thought, values and behaviour, focusing on thoughts, feelings and actions and thus can lay a basis for a “spirituality of action” where individuals can reflect on their total experience and discern, in a reflective process, where God is calling them. They evaluate their experience around the reality of events, feelings and cognitions, in the light of the Gospel and make judgements and take action and then review it in the light of experience. Hence a spirituality is defined in terms of experience, reflection, decision and action which is the basis for educational pedagogy as well as spiritual development as indicated below in his diagram.

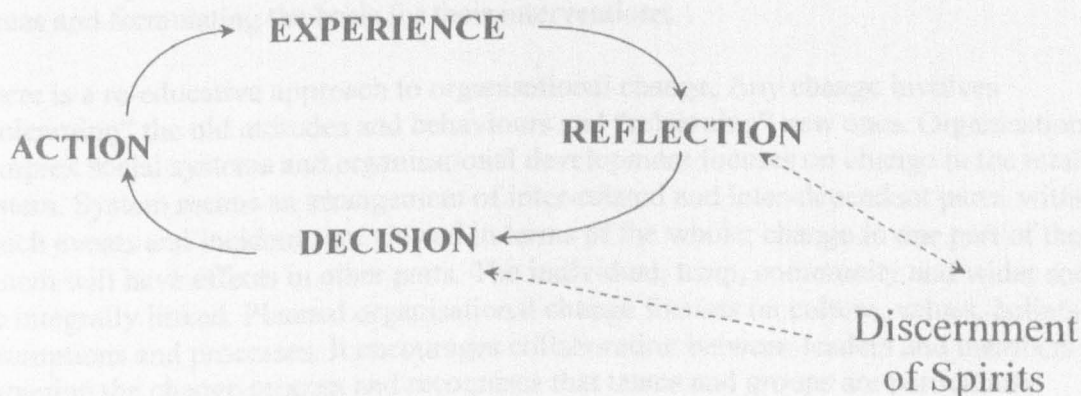


Figure 2-1 Ignatian Pedagogy

## The Adaptive Coping Cycle

Organisations can engage in this process of change. He described the adaptive coping cycle, which outlines the experience of change in six steps outlined below.

1. sensing a change in the external or internal environment – this begins with someone who senses the need for change
2. getting the information to the right place where it can be processed and acted upon – the information of Step 1 is taken to the director and reflected upon
3. digesting the information and drawing the right conclusions – getting the information to where it can be processed
4. making the necessary internal changes in the organisation and managing the change – changes then have to be made which is not a simple process



5. developing new action – the outcome of the process of sensing, reflecting and making changes may be new action which must be related if the changes made have some visible manifestation, outcome and impact.
6. obtaining feedback on the new actions – new sensing cycle, reviewing the outcomes of the actions and obtaining feedback on those outcomes.

### **Process consultation**

Process consultation can be applied to an individual and also to a whole organisation, where the “process consultation” helps clients enquire into their experience, develop their own understanding of what is happening, and create their own solutions, which is in direct contrast with traditional consultation models. Process consultation is based on building effective helping relationships and working jointly with clients so they can solve their own problems who then can become process consultants within their own organisations, learning to help their colleagues to see what is happening and why and how to build and implement solutions. Two fundamental categories are: *content*, what is to be done and *process issues*, how it is to be done. Those using process consultation utilise a matrix of content and process, relating to the task at hand and interpersonal relations, in perceiving issues and formulating the basis for their interventions.

There is a re-educative approach to organisational change. Any change involves “unlearning” the old attitudes and behaviours and “relearning” new ones. Organisations are complex social systems and organisational development focuses on change in the total system. System means an arrangement of inter-related and inter-dependent parts, within which events and incidents are viewed in terms of the whole; change in one part of the system will have effects in other parts. The individual, team, community and wider society are integrally linked. Planned organisational change focuses on culture, values, beliefs and assumptions and processes. It encourages collaboration between leaders and members in managing the change process and recognises that teams and groups are particularly important for the achievement of tasks.

Coghlan believes that Organisational development relies on “action research” which is where consultants and members of the organisation reflect on the experience of change and take action in the light of it as change unfolds. It is one of the cornerstones of organisation development. He explains that the participants in the social system are involved in collecting data about themselves, using the data to take some remedial or developmental action and at the same time generating an understanding of what is taking place. It is the application of the scientific method of fact-finding and experimentation to practical problems, requiring planning, action, and review and involving the co-operation of social scientists and participants. The outcomes are solutions to practical problems and contributions to scientific knowledge.

The group responsible for development and change must thus go through a “learning process” to develop norms which support discernment, learning, and change which involves building trust and sharing faith, learning to question assumptions, reflect on process and to articulate what was learned. They must design and monitor the change process by diagnosing the learning and renewal needs, translating them into workable issues and then creating structures, task forces and groups to deal with the issues. They then need to learn how to learn into a way of working which facilitates discernment and learning. Learning cannot spread across the organisation unless such a “transition management group” is created which is accountable for organisational learning. This group then needs to monitor the work and progress, while keeping in touch with and informing the whole organisation; such work is a “way of life.” The description of this group is

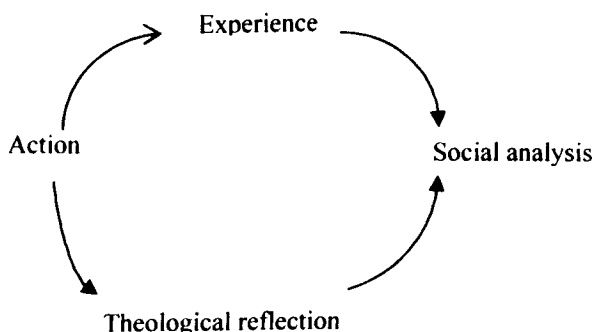
similar to what we did in the research process and will be on-going as the Development Group and Management Group continue to work together, as outlined in Chapter Five. (Coghlan, 1999)

What Coghlan has outlined does reflect the ingredients of our research process and “way of life” for three years and does also provide a useful framework of “theory and practice” helping us to understand, both what “did” happen but it also provides guidelines for us and other organisations to progress future development. We did work as individuals, team and organisation, “I-we-us-them”, using Action Research which was the cornerstone and fruit of our organisational development and change. As a founder member, ethnographer, with long-term involvement as researcher/worker, in hindsight, I also perceive myself as an internal organisational consultant working “with” the co-researchers. I did also work with an Ignatian process consultation approach, to some degree, bringing an awareness of and skills in attending to the movements of the Spirit with those engaged in the tasks of renewal and change which we were concerned with, by facilitating the discernment of the Spirit’s movement, particularly since that was the subject matter for our research. Motivation was a key consideration throughout and we did have to consider, as Coghlan points out, being open to the need for change (unfreezing), changing (moving) and then re-inforcing and stabilising the change (refreezing), while providing psychological safety. As an organisation, we don’t want to revert to old ways and patterns but our structures should safe-guard this process now, as outlined in the Chair of Trustees 2001 Report in Chapter Three.

Our organisational development did place great emphasis on process which included considering the past aim, mission and vision in order to envision the future so that the present needs could be determined and changes made accordingly, that is, considering: *The Then, The Now and The Future*. We also considered what was working well and didn’t need to change. But the changes we did make need to be stabilised, maintained and monitored. This understanding is contained in the “Model” for understanding spirituality as described in Chapter Four and throughout Chapter Six.

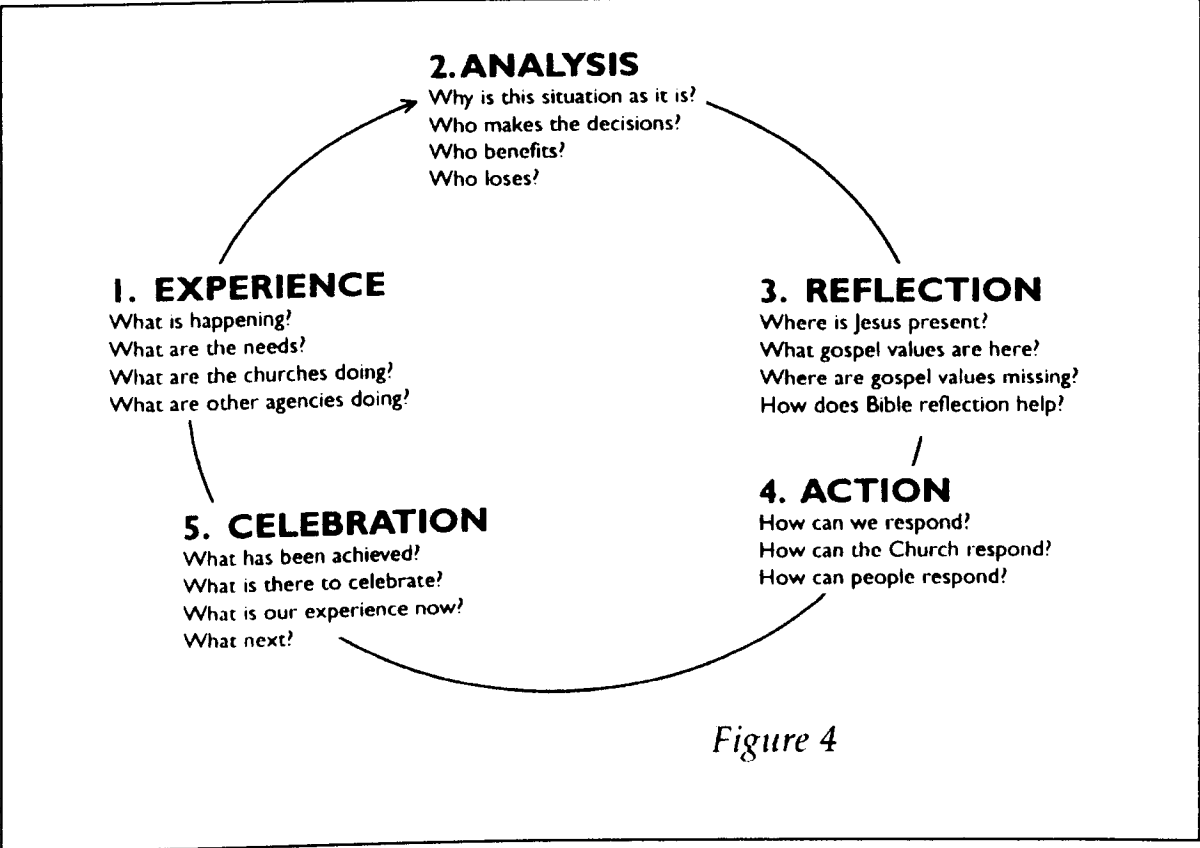
## 16. The Pastoral Cycle

Jeanne, a co-researcher, stated in her interview that we are at an interesting point at Holton Lee since we have done a lot of spade work through the research and need to actually get involved in something more like “action” as one of the stages of the “Pastoral Cycle”. In it experiences are shared, followed by information input and discussion and a sharing of ideas and a period of reflection when participants put their experiences and discussion into the context of their faith, followed by a period for planning action to be taken. (CAFOD Campaign, 1989-91) The Pastoral Cycle is also referred to in Chapter Five.



Jeanne has also described the Pastoral Cycle in her recent book stating that, “By making use of the pastoral cycle we can find, if not prescriptions, at least means of monitoring progress.” Hinton and Price state that it is a very simple but effective tool and describe it

with five elements which they developed in their “New Way programmes” as outlined below. (Hinton and Price, 2003: 56-63)



**17. On- going Spiritual development and fruits**

After all is said and done we really know if we are living authentic spirituality by the fruits of our lives, both personal and corporate, as the research has shown. As Underhill states the Holy Spirit is everywhere, in all things, ceaselessly at work upon our small and half grown Spirits, creating and illuminating, restoring and spiritualising as in transforming action. Real communication between souls is invisible and spiritual, below the surface of daily life, since we are deeply interconnected and not separate little units, so all that we do, feel and endure has a secret effect, radiating far beyond ourselves. We enter a vast “*spiritual society*” in which our souls are living tools of the Holy Spirit and become a real distribution centre of God’s creative power which is an unfailing supply provided we spend it all again. Spiritual development is largely effected by God if we will pay the price of losing our separate lives so we may find life. (Underhill, *Life as Prayer*:4-8)

Lawrence Freeman also points out that once started upon the spiritual journey there is no turning back. We do not see God through scientific methods of analysis, objectification and proof but we do see God in love, we have to be whole hearted and prepared to go all the way with a determination to be transformed. This road to life is narrow and demanding, requiring a condition of complete simplicity, demanding not less that everything, a process, a breakthrough into love, which demands total purification of our own entrenched systems of illusion and self-deception, that is, the system that constitutes the false-self in each of us. We do not enjoy a vision of ultimate reality as isolated individuals but only as parts of a whole because, as we experience it in nature, art or in human love and compassion, the vision of God is gratuitous and not a means to any end. Instead, it is like the indefinable, ungraspable nature of material beauty, which transcends imagination and prediction. He suggests that to pay attention to the good in the midst of evil is the strongest weapon to

defeat the unloving and to insist especially on looking deep enough into the ugliness to find the beauty of consciousness itself is the best way of healing what has deformed humanity and the world. (Freeman, 2002:2-5)

All of the principles outlined above apply to anyone anywhere who is attempting to understand and live true spirituality. None of us can give what we haven't got and so to the degree that we allow ourselves to be transformed is the degree to which we can continue to live out our spirituality and offer uncontaminated love. It is our personal choice. "When the evening of this life comes" says St John of the Cross, "you will be judged on love." The only question asked will be "have you loved well?" "All else will be resumed in this; all thoughts, beliefs, desires, struggles and achievements, all the complex activities of the upper and lower floor", which mean our spiritual/soul and human life. "For Faith is nothing unless it be the obscure vision of a loved Reality and Hope is nothing, unless it be the confidence of a perfect love. So too with all the persons, events, opportunities, conflicts and choices proposed for the soul's purification and growth. Was everything that was done, done for love's sake?" (Underhill, 1929:118) It is "...not what we say or do, but what we are, provides the medium through which God reaches those to whom we are sent." Underhill believed that we should be live wires as links between God's grace and the world that needs it. In order to be wires we have to first offer ourselves, without conditions, as transmitters of God's enabling love and in this way our human spirit can touch and change another human spirit. (Underhill, *Life as Prayer*:15) We each have to answer the question alone, in the evening of our life. There is no one else to take accountability for us. She points out that the fruits of the Spirit are those dispositions and ways of thinking, speaking and acting which are brought forth in us by the pressure of Divine Love in our souls as manifestations. They represent a progressive series from the point of Love, the *eternal living seed* from which all else grow. Love is the budding point from which all the rest come. The first sign is a tiny bud of this Charity breaking through the hard and rigid outline of our life. (Underhill, 1995)

## **18. Contexts and environments for praxis**

Nouwen emphasises that we cannot live the spiritual life alone because the life of the Spirit is like a *seed* that needs fertile ground to grow, which is a good inner disposition and supportive milieu, which we are responsible for, where we grow and mature, that is, one which allows the mustard seed that God has sown in us to grown into a *strong tree*. (Nouwen, 1994) It could be that some environments or contexts seeking to embed spirituality praxis and theory as described in this Report, might find what has been said uncomfortable, threatening, challenging and costly. If spirituality is embodied within people and the structures, then transformation is required at personal, social, national and international levels. If "true spirituality" is liberatory, emancipatory, empowering and freeing, then perhaps the poor would be heard and the great and growing gap between the rich and poor would lessen, if both were working towards the same intentions and spirituality praxis. However, this would require more than a superficial or surface change, but rather both the rich and the poor both have to move to a new paradigm of inclusiveness, being able to walk the talk so that their words and actions matched. Power would be shared for the sake of our global home which is dying; we are all connected and so what one does affects the other. Decisions would be made from informed understanding and theory, so action would be orthopraxis rather than the 80% rich getting richer at the expense of the 20% they oppress. Dominant paradigms would be shifted "if" people at the hierarchical top, in government, business and corporations took spirituality seriously. It could also be that employees seeking authentic praxis would have to choose differently and ethically, with their own integrity and self-esteem, that is, if the organisations they are part of are not living in line with what they have learned as a result of their own personal wake up call and transformation. Since we can't change or love on demand therefore we have to

rely on such a transformation and change of consciousness as we travel with our companions on the journey. In this dark night of the world many are realising that what did work isn't working anymore and in such a personal and corporate impasse, we must now shift from the "I" to the "we" since we are all connected.

We have to let go of our "ego" and what "seemed" true in order to let something new emerge, because, as Soelle pointed out, "the truth cannot communicate itself only as correct belief but is dependent on the struggle for liberation". Our own context may be that of large or small businesses, workplaces, corporations, governments, churches, schools, charities, hospitals or families yet we are brothers and sisters together. Spirituality doesn't discriminate contexts in its passion for democratic, right and interactive relationships when we live in a non-hierarchical web of care, sharing power "with" others as we engage together in justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Nor does it value a privatised vertical love relationship with God at the expense of a communal horizontal love of neighbour. (Soelle, 2001). However I am not sure this is the type of spirituality people will want. For instance, as Monbiot said, corporations will take what they can: when there is a conflict between profitability and the environment and human rights, the profits come first. Voluntary agreements, simply do not work and big business will protect human rights and the environment only when forced to do so. (Monbiot, 2002) This is not to say that everything at Holton Lee is perfect and that we are an ideal model to be emulated. Rather we too have much to learn and the justification for this whole study and these suggested Guidelines is that we are trying to learn and wish to share this knowledge with others.